

COLORADO PREVIEW



THE ORIGINAL MAGAZINE DEDICATED TO NEBRASKA ATHLETICS

HUSKERS

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DESTINATION DALLAS

HUSKERS TAKE NORTH WITH 17-3 WIN OVER KSU



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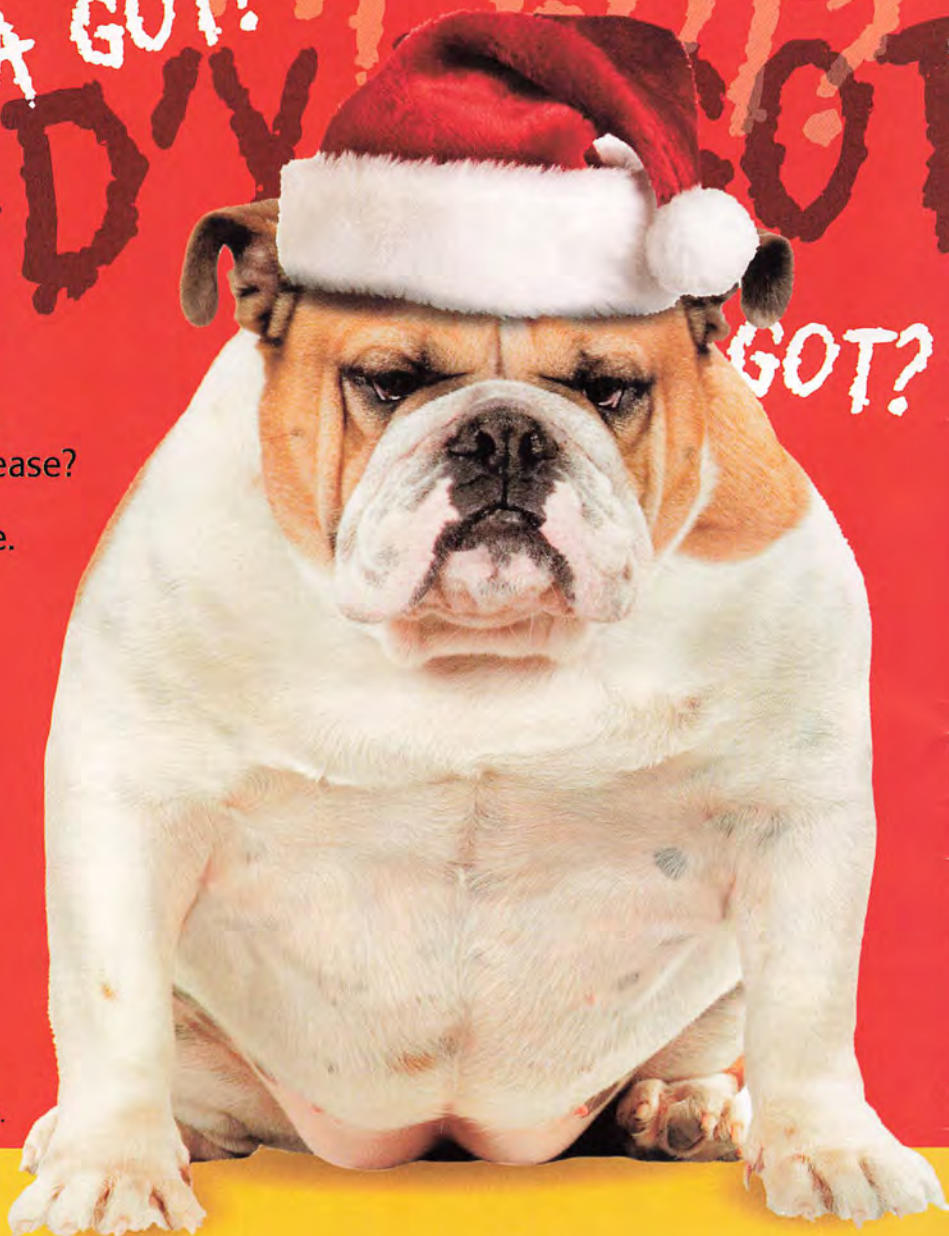
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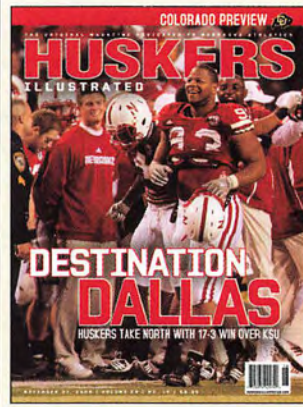
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ON THE COVER

Senior defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh is all smiles after his final home. Suh recorded nine tackles, 1.5 sacks, 2 tackles for losses of 6 yards and 2 pass breakups in his final game at Memorial Stadium.

Photo by Scott Bruhn



BACK ON TOP

Huskers complete uphill climb for division crown



BACK ON TOP. It has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

Husker fans will rest a little easier tonight. Nebraska is back in the Big 12 Championship.

With a 17-3 win over Kansas State on Saturday, the Cornhuskers captured their fifth Big 12 Conference North Division title, returning to the Big 12 title game for the first time since 2006 and just the second time this decade.

It's a bright finish to a difficult 10-year stretch that saw Colorado win four north division crowns, while Kansas State and Missouri each won two. Yes, that's right. Colorado has been to four Big 12 title games this decade. I must have intentionally purged that from my memory.

Of course there's never an easy path to a championship. But the Huskers definitely did it the hard way in 2009. Nebraska rebounded from a 1-2 start in conference play that included back-to-back home losses.

That's not easy to do. In fact Nebraska is just the second team in either division of the Big 12 to lose as many as two home games and still play for the championship. Colorado managed to lose at home to Oklahoma State (42-14) and Texas (31-7) at

Folsom Field in 2004.

Nebraska is also just the second team in either division to lose to a divisional opponent at home and win a division title. Colorado also overcame the odds after losing to the Huskers (30-3) in 2005.

Despite the tough road, the Huskers believed when most didn't. How many can honestly say they saw the Huskers playing in Dallas after turning over the ball eight times against Iowa State?

I'll admit, I didn't see this coming.

On a night of such huge stakes and postseason implications, the Huskers rose to the challenge once more and locked in a trip to Cowboys Stadium.

While Friday's game in Boulder will not alter the Huskers plans to Dallas, it has numerous implications. Nebraska can win its ninth regular season game and strut into the title game against Texas with confidence.

Confidence will mean everything in that game. Win a Big 12 title, knock Texas out of the national championship game and win a trip to the Fiesta Bowl.

Yeah, that has a nice ring to it too. **N**

Send me your comments or story ideas to aaron@huskersillustrated.com.

EDITOR,
GENERAL MANAGER
Aaron Babcock

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Mike Babcock

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Mike Babcock, Terry Douglass, John Talman,
Sean Callahan, Curt McKeever, Steve Sipple,
Brian Rosenthal, Randy York, Bob Hamar,
Rick Shaw, Sean Stevens, Mike Matya
Tommy Dahlk, Joe Ganz

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Scott Bruhn, NU Sports Information,
Aaron Babcock, Randy Hampton
and Rivals.com

SPORTS MARKETING
& ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Tim Francis (800) 524-9527, ext. 111

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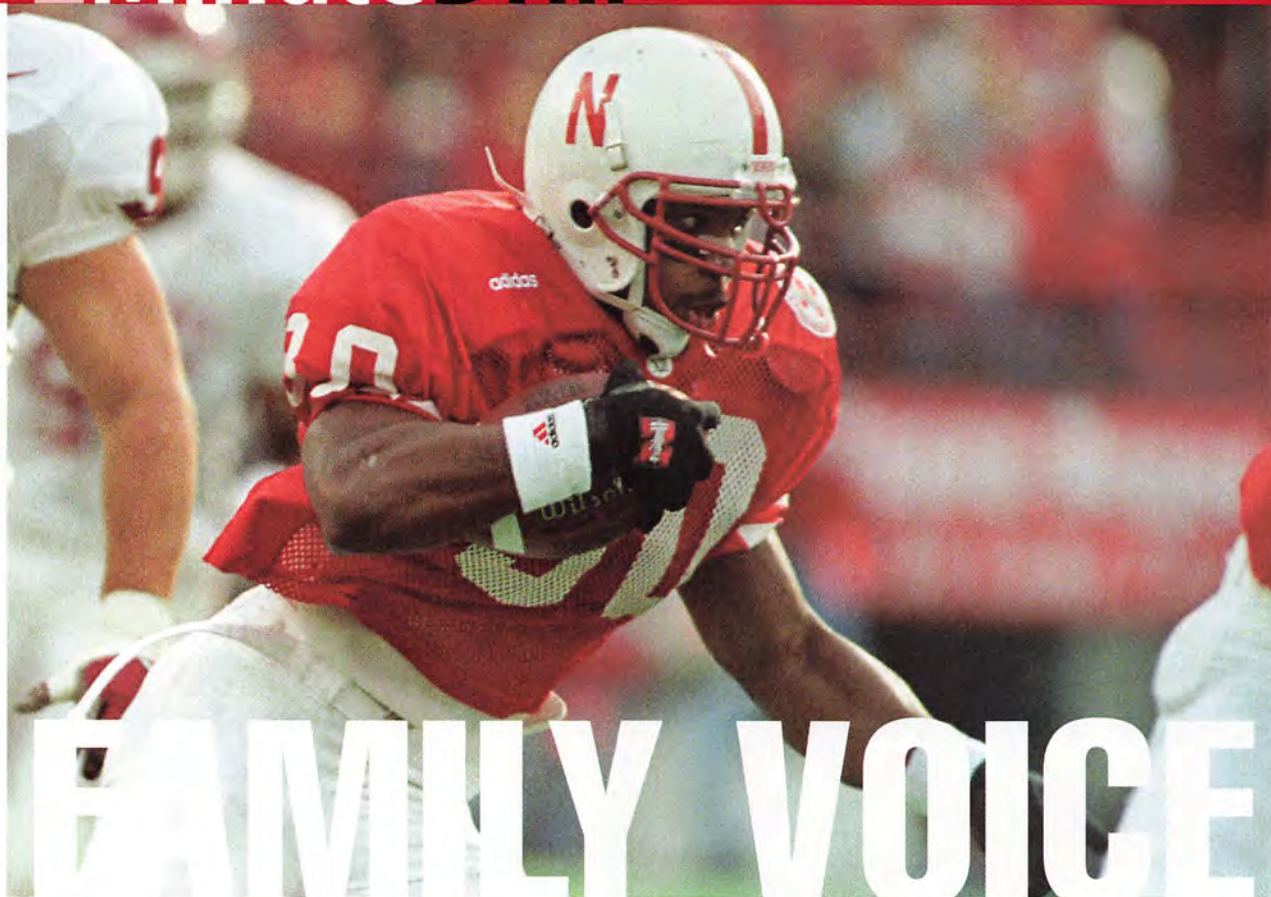
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FAMILY VOICE

After the Iowa State game, **NILES PAUL** sat in the locker room trying to come to grips with the 9-7 loss. The Cornhuskers had lost eight turnovers, including his fumble after catching a pass as he tried to stay in bounds on the way to the end zone late in the first half.

The game hadn't been over for more than 15 minutes when he received a text message.

Call me, we have to talk.

The message was from an uncle. But Paul didn't respond. "Of course I didn't call him," the junior wide receiver said. "He knows how the process goes after the games."

So a few minutes later, the uncle called, as Paul knew he would.

Oh yes, the uncle was **AHMAN GREEN**, who had just returned to the NFL, signing with the Green Bay Packers, for whom he had played from 2000 to 2006 before going to the Houston Texans.

Green had watched the game and understood Paul's feelings about the fumble. "He just told me it's happened to him multiple times, stuff like that, and it's just weird how it happens and just have short-term memory, forget about it and focus on the next game," said Paul.

Paul heeded his uncle's advice, though his tough-mindedness was apparent before the Iowa State game. In

fact, the previous game against Texas Tech, he had failed to fall on a live ball, a lateral pass, which the Red Raiders' Howard Daniel recovered and returned 82 yards for a touchdown.

"Niles has got to pay attention to the details," receivers coach **TED GILMORE** said of the two mistakes. "I don't think it's so much trying too hard. I don't think you're ever going to fault a kid for

trying hard on the field because his heart's in the right place.

"I love his heart, love his competitiveness. We've just got to pay attention to the fundamentals. Regardless of how talented you are,

"He's a hell of a player. You guys haven't seen anything, I promise you. You guys have not seen Niles Paul like we've seen Niles Paul."

CHRIS BROOKS

2MinuteDrill



FRIENDS: Junior **ZAC LEE** was prepared to step back in at quarterback after freshman **CODY GREEN** started the Baylor and Oklahoma games. That was a result of Lee's attitude.

"He was Cody's biggest fan whenever Cody had a chance to play," said offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Shawn Watson. "And Cody's his (biggest fan) now."

"They're great friends. They understand the position. They both understand they're new at the position, so they rally behind each other and really help one another out. Zac was awesome with Cody, and Cody's been awesome with Zac. I couldn't be any prouder of two guys because they've really had to be a lot of glue for us offensively. And they've hung in there."

that can creep up and get you."

Paul is talented. "He's a hell of a player," said senior wide receiver **CHRIS BROOKS**. "You guys haven't seen anything, I promise you. You guys have not seen Niles Paul like we've seen Niles Paul."

Actually, folks have seen what Paul is capable of doing. Against Kansas, for example, he caught four passes for 154 yards and had 90 yards in kick returns. Through the first 10 games, he was Nebraska's leading receiver – with 29 catches for 567 yards and three touchdowns – and kick returner.

In any case, having Green as an uncle is

"cool," Paul said.

"I love him. I don't really care that he's in the 'league.' "

Green isn't just in the NFL, by the way. He recently

became the Packers' all-time rushing

leader, moving past Hall of Fame fullback **JIM TAYLOR**.

"Every time I'm around him, we have fun, argue that I'm bigger than him when I know I'm not," said Paul. "We do what uncles and nephews do."



THE OLD MAN AND THE TEAM

Senior safety **MATT O'HANLON** is married. And he's 24-years-old. He graduated high school in Bellevue, Neb., in 2004. "I'm definitely the old man," he said. "All the guys I play with, I think, are two or three years younger than me. I think the nickname for me is 'Old-Hanlon.' "

At Nebraska's weekly news conference before the Kansas game, during his interview up-front, O'Hanlon was interrupted from the back of the room.

"What do you think about **ERIC MARTIN**? Do you think he's a good player?"

The questioner was Martin, a freshman linebacker, of course.

"Eric Martin's all right. I mean, he kind of gets crazy sometimes. He did the 'Lambeau leap' in the Baylor game, I know that. But he's a good player. He'll have a good future here," O'Hanlon said.

"Eric Martin loves you too, Matt," said Martin.

"Thanks," O'Hanlon said.

Martin was 12-years-old when O'Hanlon graduated high school.



BEAUTIFUL PERSON

TOM OSBORNE is getting the job done, not only as athletic director but also as an offensive consultant for the football team, as **SHAWN WATSON** will attest.

Following the Kansas game, Nebraska's offensive coordinator was asked about the Cornhuskers' success with play-action passes in option situations.

"Coach Osborne's input," Watson said.

That's a joke, right?

"No, it's not," said Watson.

"Coach Osborne's been awesome. He understands. He gets it. And he never forces anything on me. All he does is say, 'Look, here's some things you may want to consider now that you're moving into this aspect of your game. Coach has been . . . he's a beautiful person.'"

Watson was clearly emotional as he continued, trying to find the right words. "All those little twists, great stuff, because it's really . . . he's helped enhance us," Watson said.

"So Coach gets the credit for those."

AS GOOD AS IT GETS

KIRK BOHLS, writing in the Austin (Texas) Statesman about the Heisman Trophy race: "That said, I still can't stop thinking Nebraska's **NDAMUKONG SUH** is college football's best player."

The "that said" referred to Florida quarterback **TIM TEBOW**, Texas quarterback **COLT MCCOY** and Alabama running back **MARK INGRAM** as being in a "three-man race" for the Heisman.

SIDELINES



WILD AND CRAZY GUY

MATT O'HANLON intercepted three passes and made 12 tackles in the Cornhuskers' 10-3 victory against Oklahoma. So how's this for a celebration?

"My buddy **WES CAMMACK** came over to my apartment and we had pizza and watched (ESPN) Sports Center. That's how we celebrated. Pretty exciting," O'Hanlon said.

O'Hanlon earned a Sports Center "helmet sticker" for his performance. "I saw **LOU HOLTZ** kind of gave me some props as being the 'leading (Oklahoma) receiver,' so that's nice," said O'Hanlon, who also earned the Bronko Nagurski National Defensive Player of the Week award after the Oklahoma game.

He was the third Husker to win that honor, following **NDAMUKONG SUH** and **JARED CRICK**.

Watson, Huskers adapt on offense

You might recall the scene in the movie Apollo13 ...

There's a problem with the carbon dioxide level in the lunar excursion module. Five carbon dioxide filters aren't functioning properly, leaving the crew at risk.

"Tell me this isn't a government operation," says Gene (**ED HARRIS**), the flight controller. "Well, I suggest you gentlemen invent a way to put a square peg in a round hole...rapidly."

So the NASA crew in command central spreads an assortment of items on a table and sets to work.

Nebraska offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** referred to the scene following the Cornhuskers' 31-17 victory at Kansas, using it to describe the process of adapting the offense.

"We had to put all the pieces on the table and find a way," he said.

"The staff's been awesome. We've had to get out of all of our comfort zones. We thought we had something really special that we were working on. We've had to get out of our comfort zone, go back and put all the pieces on the table and hack away, and find a way."

Specifically, find a way to get the offense going.

The "something special" to which Watson referred, based on "the research we did in the winter," was the spread offense "and the way we were headed with that," said Watson.

Because of young receivers and injuries, however, "pretty soon you find yourself having to adjust."

So the pieces get spread out on the table. "We've had to evolve. If you've been in there hacking away with us, you know what we've been through this year," Watson said.

Statistics reflect what the Cornhuskers have been through.

Prior to the Kansas game, Nebraska

ranked 84th nationally in total offense and 71st in scoring, averaging 347 yards and 25.7 points per game. Last season, the Cornhuskers ranked 12th nationally in total offense and 17th in scoring offense, averaging 450.77 yards and 35.38 points.

Average declines of 100 yards and 10 points per game are significant.

The Kansas game was different. Nebraska scored 31 points and gained 410 yards, both highs in conference play. In fact, the Cornhuskers had managed more than 285 yards of total offense against a Big 12 opponent only once – they had 362 in the 9-7 loss against Iowa State.

Against Kansas, as was the case against Oklahoma, Nebraska used more sets with two tight ends and a fullback. "That's in our offense," said Watson. "Is it a big part of it? It wasn't because (last season) we had **JOE GANZ** and **NATE SWIFT** and **TODD PETERSON**. Now we've got a new quarterback, new receivers, and we're having to evolve a little bit. So it's just a step in how we evolve."

Eventually, the Cornhusker offense will return to "running our style," Watson said.

Those metaphorical carbon dioxide filters will be functioning properly.



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"PRINCE" BALL

Apparently, junior cornerback **PRINCE AMUKAMARA** was just following instructions when he intercepted a pass and returned it to the Oklahoma 1-yard line to set up the game's only touchdown in Nebraska's 10-3 victory against the Sooners.

"I said, 'Prince, this week I want you to go out and play 'Prince' ball. And 'Prince' ball is, he's going to be aggressive," secondary coach **MARVIN SANDERS** said after practice the next week. "He's got his little quirks that he does, but 'just go out and have fun and play your kind of game.'"

What quirks?

"He's Prince, that's all I can say. That's something we talk about in our meeting room, and I won't get into it, but you'll love him in spite of himself," said Sanders.

OK, for example, when Amukamara is

introduced on Memorial Stadium's Husker-Vision boards, he says: "Salutations Husker Nation."

"That's Prince, again," Sanders said. "That's a quirk. Only Prince would do that."

SHORT INTO LONG

When I-back **ROY HELU, JR.** is on his game, the offensive linemen just have to give him a small opening and he'll take care of the rest. "Roy's just a heck of a football player," center **JACOB HICKMAN** said earlier in the season. "We'd get him up to the second level and he'd be hit at 3 yards and turn it into 15. I mean, that's all him. We can get him past the line of scrimmage; everything else is him."

Breakout runs are "just a testament to how good of a player he is," said Hickman. "He's fun to block for."

SIDELINES



MANAGING THE GAME

The quarterback has to walk a fine line between being a game manager and a playmaker in Nebraska's offense, according to junior **ZAC LEE**.

"I think 90 percent of the snaps in a game you have to be a game manager because that's all that's required of you. You get the ball to guys who can make plays or hand it off to the running backs and they make plays," Lee said early in the season. "I think there's probably 10 plays in a game – or five plays in a game – where you have to step outside the box."

"There's only going to be a handful of them, but you have to step outside the box and make plays, and hopefully, that's when you go from a manager to a playmaker. But also within those situations, trying to step outside the box, you have to make sure that you don't do something negative."

Managing the game can mean simply cutting your losses. "The best thing to do sometimes is just throw the ball away, even when you're outside the box, trying to make a play," said Lee.



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READING THE FIELD

BY JOE GANZ

Colorado a rivalry? Not even after last year

EVERY YEAR before the Colorado game, it seems the question always gets asked: Is the annual Nebraska-Colorado match-up really a rivalry for the Cornhuskers?

In my opinion, it's kind of tough to consider it a rivalry, especially with the way both programs have struggled in recent years. For it to truly be a rivalry, I think both teams need to be good and playing games that mean something. If it always came down to Nebraska and Colorado for the Big 12 North Division title every year on the day after Thanksgiving, then yes, it would be a huge rivalry.

I don't now if it's the case for Colorado's players because you don't really get caught up in the whole rivalry aspect, but for the Colorado fans, I think it is a rivalry game – that “red-letter game” they've always talked about. The Buffaloes' fans are pretty brutal to you when you play for Nebraska.

If there is a team in the North that I considered a rival, it would probably be Missouri. A lot of the Tigers' players are pretty cocky and they like to talk a lot and they might play a little dirtier than other teams.

After Nebraska beat Missouri this year, I think the series is going to become an even more intense rivalry than it already

is. The only negative to Nebraska-Missouri being more of a rivalry is we usually play them early in the year, while the Colorado game is at the end of the year and kind of set up more to be a rivalry, but both teams need to keep up their end of the bargain.

That said, last year's Nebraska-Colorado game was pretty amazing. Our offense didn't play as well as it should have and we needed to have performed better in the red zone, but it was still surprising when they jumped out 14-0 because their offense hadn't been that great – it was an odd start and odd game.

Of course, what was really amazing how the game finished with us trailing 31-30 and then having Alex Henery hit a 57-yard field goal and Ndamukong Suh picking off the pass and stepping on Colorado quarterback Cody Hawkins on his way to the end zone.

Probably the most amazing thing about Suh's play is that he scored and threw the ball into the fence and Ty Steinkuhler was running around with his helmet off on the field and no penalties were called. Ty and I were just talking about it the other day, how weird it was that the officials didn't call anything. He has a picture on his fridge of him with his

helmet off at about the goal line. I think they knew what it meant and they just let it go.

When Coach Pelini sent Alex out there on the field for the 57-yard field goal, I knew he could make it. I had seen him make 60-yarders in practice indoors, so I knew he had the leg for it, but I just didn't know if he'd be able to do it in that situation with him being outside, it being cold and all the pressure – it's not that I ever doubted him, but it's a lot different than practice.

When Alex was about ready to kick it, I kind of got off to the side where I could see everything and judge the distance and see if it was on line. When it started off, I didn't think it was going in. It looked like it was going to be wide right, but Alex kind of drew it back a little bit – just like a little golf shot – and it had the distance and it was just unbelievable.

I don't even remember what I did after Alex made that kick. All I know is that I was about the fourth one to get to him and congratulate him. I was just thanking him and celebrating. Obviously, Alex is probably the best kicker in the Big 12 and one of the best in the country, but that's something I'll always remember him by is saving day and saving our skin with that huge field goal. **N**

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WISNER, NE



His hometown "really smells," **MYCHAE**
MCCLURE said – with affection.

The smell is from the feedlots that are Wisner's lifeblood. It is the smell of money.

"It's basically a cattle town," said McClure.

"There are feedlots all the way around us, so the town can't really expand. Everybody works for the cattle company, in some shape or form."

His dad builds feedlots, and his mom works for a large feedlot company.

McClure, a redshirted freshman tight end, said he never really noticed the smell until he left to walk on at Nebraska, a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a dream come true," he said.

He was considering South Dakota and Wayne State. But when Cornhusker offensive line coach **BARNEY COTTON** visited, "I knew I was coming here," McClure said.

McClure, a multi-sport athlete at Wisner-Pilger High School, weighed 195 pounds when he arrived at Nebraska. He weighs 238 now, and credits nutritionist **JOSH HINGST** for the increase.

"He's great," said McClure. "When I first came here, I just tried to eat everything, tried to put on so much weight I was starting to fall asleep because I was eating unhealthy. Now that I actually started eating healthy, I have so much energy. Nutrition is the key, eating the right things."

That means mixing in some fruit and vegetables with his steaks.

"Otherwise, I would just eat steak, all day, or hamburgers," he said.

Though he has seen only limited action on the extra-point and kickoff-return teams, McClure has no complaints. "There's so much time you put into it you've got to be dedicated," he said. "If you don't really love football . . . it's going to weed out the people who don't love it."

McClure also loves his hometown. His major is fisheries and wildlife, so he misses the outdoors. And he misses "everybody knowing everybody," he said. "It's just a big community."

WISNER, NE

County: Cuming

Population: 1,273

Distance from Lincoln: 95 miles

NU FOOTBALL LETTERMEN:

***Warren Alfson, G, (1938-39-40)

Lewis H. Brown, QB (1930-31)

*Gerald LaNoue, HB (1933-35)

*All-conference selection

#All-American

DID YOU KNOW?

► McClure's older brother, Kellen, is a high jumper on the Nebraska track and field team. Kellen is a "computer whiz, so any time I have problems with anything electronic, he fixes it," Mychael said. Also, Kellen "likes to talk to people. He's the talker in the family."

► Warren Alfson was an All-America guard, along with Forrest Behm, on the 1941 Rose Bowl team. The Cornhuskers adjusted their defense in an attempt to deal with Stanford's innovative T-formation offense, with Alfson playing linebacker. The 6-foot-1/2, 188-pound Alfson was the oldest of those who played in the Rose Bowl game that day, at age 25.

► The town gets its name from Samuel P. Wisner, vice president of the Sioux City and Pacific Railroad. The name was changed from Lakeview in 1876.

SIDELINES



PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT

At his weekly news conference on the Tuesday before the

Oklahoma game, coach **BO**

PELINI was asked if there might

be a "transition period" in the

huddle when multiple freshmen

were playing. The question

was based on freshman **CODY**

GREEN'S starting at quarterback

the previous week at Baylor, along

with redshirted freshmen **KHIRY**

COOPER and **BEN COTTON**.

In addition, true freshman

running back **DONTRAYEVOUS**

ROBINSON had begun seeing

action after being pulled from a

redshirt.

"No, I don't think so," said Pelini.

"Our (older) guys, they're in the

huddle with them every day.

Those things happen consistently.

They've been going on since the

start of camp.

"I don't think that's a big issue."



STATE OF THE HUSKERS

BY CURT MCKEEVER

Pelini & Osborne: A strange but perfect match

THIS BO PELINI guy just can't leave well enough alone, huh?

Here he is getting his Nebraska football team ready to play Kansas State in a game that will settle the Big 12 North Division and he's picking a fight with the ol' ball coach.

"He's been a real pain in the butt," Pelini said.

Understand, this wasn't another reference to the Wildcats' 70-year-old recently un-retired Bill Snyder, who after a win at Nebraska in 2003 drew Pelini's wrath for what NU's then-defensive coordinator thought amounted to running up the score.

No, this was a man taking a poke at his boss, Tom Osborne.

Relax, folks. It was all in good humor.

Granted, the personalities of Pelini and Osborne seem about as compatible as Felix Ungar and Oscar Madison. But you'd have to admit those guys made a fun-loving Odd Couple.

Right now, I picture Pelini and Osborne carrying out serious Xs and Os discussions behind closed doors, but also carrying on like a couple of long-lost friends.

"Obviously, Coach Osborne, he'll give his opinions," Pelini said before asked to describe what their conversations are usually like. "It depends on the subject. It depends whether he is mad at me or likes what I am doing."

But seriously.

"There's not a better athletic director

in the country that I would want to work for. It's not even close," Pelini continued. "He's extremely supportive...You couldn't ask for a better situation."

Just ask offensive coordinator Shawn Watson.

After he decided that the Huskers would be better off running more out of the power-I formation against Oklahoma and Kansas, Osborne came offering Watson some input that he took to heart.

The Huskers, after getting 141 rushing yards to eke out a win against the Sooners, surged to 214 in its win over the Jayhawks.

"All he does is say, 'Look, here are some things that you may want to consider now that you are moving into this aspect of your game,' " said Watson, who like Pelini is appreciative to have the advice. "You can't be so proud that your pride gets in the way of you winning as a team. I'll never do that. I love what I know, but I'm not afraid to open my box up and go outside my box so that we can win."

Obviously, the bottom line in big-time college football is how much you win, so following up on a 9-4 rookie campaign like he has this season puts Pelini in a good light.

But even if the Huskers weren't clicking off victories at the rate they are – and looking like they're headed for even better times in the near future – something tells me coach and boss would still be doing fine.

Perhaps the simplest way to put it is

that they click.

"I look at it as a bonus. I don't have all the answers. I'm trying to get better every day. I'm trying to get better every week. Here's a gentleman who's lived it in so many different ways," Pelini said. "Forget about X's and O's ... the things that happen, the mistakes you make, the media, the fans, whatever it may be, just having his insight there is a tremendous advantage to me ... If anything I wish he would speak up more."

"I want to make it sound the right way, but I feel like he talks to me like my father used to talk to me, in that he's extremely supportive, but he's willing to give his opinion and be real black and white, and say, 'I think this is something you need to fix,' or 'I like how you did this, but this is something you should probably think about working on.' That's a great thing to have."

Recently, Pelini found himself somewhat sheepishly asking Osborne about dealing with frustration over referees and how he might deliver his points in a better fashion.

"It's just good to have another sounding board from somebody who has been there and can help you sort through what you feel is the right thing for your football team is," Pelini said.

And so what advice did Osborne have in regard to the refs?

"He said give 'em hell."

Pelini laughed as he revealed that.

I'm not so sure, though, that he, or Osborne, was kidding. **N**



Dejon Gomes

6-0, 190, Junior, Cornerback, Hayward, Calif.

Dejon Gomes has had an immediate impact, earning a Blackshirt and starting when Nebraska has opened in its "dime" package. He and No. 1 "nickel back" Eric Hagg are hybrids, doing "a lot of things that are linebacker-like," coach Bo Pelini said. "We use those guys a lot of times very similar to how we use linebackers.

"They're big; they have nice size to them. They are very athletic, and now their level of understanding is better, and we can use them in a lot of different roles throughout each game plan. It gives us a lot more versatility and puts a lot of speed on the field."

Gomes transferred from City College of San Francisco, which won a junior college championship his freshman season. He enrolled at Nebraska in January and went through spring practice. He played running back primarily in high school.

HI: What did you think about the atmosphere at the Oklahoma-Nebraska football game?

GOMES: It was crazy. Probably the greatest football turnout ... crazy, greatest fans I've ever seen. When I came on my visit, for the Colorado game last year, that was real big, but I think this was a bigger game and a bigger rivalry. So the fans came out and supported us more.

HI: When the crowd gets into the game that much, how do they impact the defense's performance?

GOMES: We feed off the crowd's energy a lot, especially when they (the Sooners) were backed up. We could just hear the whole stadium rockin'. That made us play that much harder to get the stop and get off the field.

HI: What other Husker sporting events have you attended since you've been in Lincoln?

GOMES: I've been to basketball, track and a couple of gym meets, just to go out and support the other sports, see how they're doing. I have some friends on other teams.

HI: What advantage did you see to arriving on campus early for spring football?

GOMES: I got to hit the playbook hard. It's a big playbook we put in in the spring. I got to get up and watch film so I could visualize how the plays would work out on the field. The returning players, Larry (Asante), Matt (O'Hanlon), Rickey (Thenarse), A-West (Anthony West) they really helped me out. In the summertime we were installing real fast. The pace was faster, so in the spring I was able to get a jump on that.

HI: What have you learned the most from coach Marvin Sanders and the defensive staff in general?

GOMES: Probably technique and playing within the scheme. It seems like it won't get you plays but in the long run it will. I've seen that happen, me personally, and other teammates. It's just the scheme is real well put together, so you never know who's going to be making plays out on the field. As long as everyone's doing their job, then some-one's going to make a play.

HI: Who's the funniest player on the team?

GOMES: Phil Dillard. He's just always making jokes, always talking about somebody, making everybody smile, laugh. He's just an overall good guy.

HI: What was your biggest adjustment to Nebraska, living in Nebraska?

GOMES: The weather, in the springtime and in January when I first got here. Well, the winter. I remember one day it was negative-8, walking from the dorms at 5 in the morning to workouts. It was pretty cold.

HI: What are your plans after football?

GOMES: Sports psychologist or go help out my father with an adult care home back home back in California, physically and some mentally-challenged adults.

HI: What's your favorite TV show?

GOMES: TV Guide. Somehow I always turn to the TV Guide Channel to see what's on and I end up watching that for about an hour.

HI: What's the last book you read?

GOMES: The Terrell Owens book. A biography. He worked real hard, and his parents, especially his grandma, were real strict on him. I think that got him the work ethic that he has today.



Jeff Carpenter

Still connected to Nebraska football



WITH ALL DUE respect to New York Yankee legend Lou Gehrig, who once called himself “the luckiest man on the face of the earth,” Jeff Carpenter sometimes thinks he might be the luckiest Nebraska football player in the world.

Carpenter, you see, is in a line of work that still has a direct influence on Husker Game Day, so at age 55, the former Nebraska captain still has the adrenaline of someone half his age.

“I still work out. I stay in shape. In my business, I have to,” he said. “I wasn’t the greatest athlete, so I had to make up for it with hard work. The same principle applies to what I do now.”

As a regional sales manager for XOS Technologies, a video editing software company, Carpenter works with more than 50 schools that use his company’s integrated video game preparation system, including every member of the Big 12 Conference.

XOS commands about 80 percent of the market for BCS (Bowl Championship Series) schools and for about 70 percent of the NFL teams. Carpenter’s only NFL client is

the Oakland Raiders, but that’s only because they prefer not to work with anyone else.

Football is Carpenter’s comfort zone. When the three-year letterman strongside linebacker graduated from Nebraska, he became a Husker graduate assistant and held a part-time job on the NU staff for three more years. He then spent two years as an assistant coach at South Dakota and one at West Texas State. A one-year stint as head coach at Littleton (Colo.) High School was followed by three years as the outside linebackers coach at Ball State.

In 1989, Carpenter moved off the field and into the videotape business that was so vital to coaches. Back then, it was fairly simple to break down film.

Five years with one company in Florida led to three years with Avid Technologies in Texas, where Carpenter still lives. One of 12 original employees at Avid Sports, Carpenter’s role expanded when the division spun off from its parent and quickly grew to 130 employees.

This fall, Carpenter met his three children for a Husker home football

JEFF CARPENTER

LETTERS: 1975-76-77

POSITION: Strongside linebacker

WIFE: Donna

CHILDREN: Son Jeremy, 33; Daughters Mary Shea, 30, and Chelsea, 22

CURRENT: Regional Sales Manager, XOS Technologies

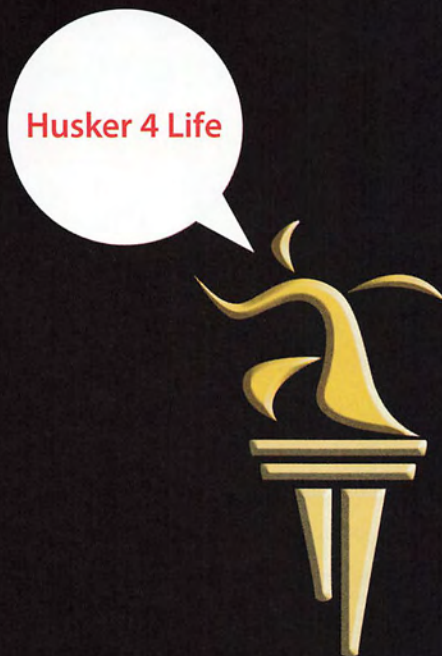
RESIDENCE: Melissa, Texas

game after he met with Mike Nobler, Nebraska’s first-year football video coordinator. Nobler oversees the Huskers’ 36-client XOS coaching video network that is used by the entire staff on a near-daily basis.

Carpenter says it’s amazing what XOS can now put into the hands of coaches, especially Nebraska’s staff, which has the newest capabilities on perhaps the best system. “Just about everything now – pictures, power points, programs, sets, videos – is all integrated,” he said.

Simplifying the complexity of football is a daily, weekly, monthly, yearly grind, but Carpenter likes what he sees under Bo Pelini’s leadership.

“As important as new technology is,” he said, “it’s still all about bringing back the old Nebraska.” **N**



Hawkins says team is evolving, won't quit

BY STEVEN M. SIPPLE

COLORADO SOPHOMORE Rodney Stewart has blossomed into one of the best running backs in the Big 12. And he's been one of the few bright spots during a difficult season for the Buffaloes.

"He has great feet," Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins said. "He's very quick. He has really good vision. He's extremely tough and powerful for a guy his size. He's an extremely tough competitor. I mean, he's just a very competitive kid."

Stewart, a native of Westerville, Ohio, was lightly recruited out of high school. But he made an immediate impact at Colorado last season, finishing his rookie year with 622 rushing yards. Through 10 games this season – not including a Nov. 19 contest at Oklahoma State – the 5-foot-7, 170-pound Stewart had rushed 169 times for 673 yards, or 3.9 per carry, with nine touchdowns.

He also had nine receptions for 51 yards.

Trouble is, Colorado had a record of 3-7 overall (2-4 Big 12) entering the Oklahoma State contest.

Nevertheless, Hawkins saw good things happening.

"Defensively, I think we've been playing pretty good football," he said. "We've had a couple different spots in there where you'd love to go wire to wire and have everything be clean. But I think we've done a decent job on the backend. We gave up a few too many rushing yards to Iowa State (194 on Nov. 14).



"Offensively, I think we're an ever-evolving group. We have a young quarterback (sophomore Tyler Hansen). Markques Simas is a wideout who's coming on for us to obviously complement Scotty McKnight. I think our offensive line continues to work and grow and do a better job.

"I think that group has a chance to be good when they put all the pieces together. I think that's the exciting part about those guys."

Hawkins was upbeat the Monday following the Iowa State loss.

"Our guys are great," he said. "I love our players. I really do. They're in it heart and soul and have done a great job. I have every confidence that they will play hard. That's just kind of how we do things around here. Even in all the games, there's no quit in them."

COLORADO NOTES

► Hawkins was 53-11 in five seasons as

head coach at Boise State. During the Big 12 teleconference Nov. 16, he was upbeat about his future at Colorado, saying he has strong relationships with Athletic Director Mike Bohn and Chancellor Philip DiStefano. "They've been great," Hawkins said.

COLORADO QUICK FACTS

Head coach: Dan Hawkins, 108-54-1 in 13 seasons, 16-31 in 4th season at Colorado

Career vs. Nebraska: 1-2

Series: NU leads, 47-18-2

at Lincoln: NU leads, 25-8-2

at Boulder: NU leads, 20-9-2

Note: Nebraska and Colorado have split the last 8 games after the Huskers won 9 straight from 1992-2000.

2009 SCHEDULE

9/6 Colorado State, L, 17-23
9/11 at Toledo, L, 38-54
9/19 Wyoming, W, 24-0
10/1 at West Virginia, L, 24-35
10/10 at Texas, L, 14-38
10/17 Kansas, W, 34-30
10/24 at Kansas State, L, 6-20
10/31 Missouri, L, 17-36
11/7 Texas A&M, W, 35-34
11/14 at Iowa State, L, 10-17
11/19 at Oklahoma State, 6:30pm
11/27 Nebraska, 2:30pm

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Calculated risk

With a 10-3 halftime lead and yet another dominant defensive performance seemingly in the

works, Nebraska's offensive unit knew it didn't need much to put the Cornhuskers into a comfort zone against Kansas State.

With that in mind, Nebraska offensive coordinator Shawn Watson took a calculated gamble. Facing a third-and-1 situation from the Huskers' own 39-yard line on their first possession of the second half, Watson called for a play-action pass in hopes of surprising the Wildcats deep.

Watson's call was executed to near perfection as quarterback Zac Lee faked the handoff to I-back Roy Helu Jr., received good protection and lofted a long pass to wide receiver Niles Paul, who came up with a 47-yard reception at the Kansas State 14. On the next play, Helu rushed for a touchdown, providing Nebraska with its final margin in a 17-3 Big 12 Conference North Division-clinching victory over the Wildcats.

"We knew that Kansas State was really active on the play-action pass," Watson said. "There were a lot of guys in that box and we knew it was there. We just took the shot at them."

With Kansas State starting defensive back Tysyn Hartman injured on the previous play, Watson said it appeared to be



PHOTO BY AARON BARCOCK

"the perfect situation" to try and burn the Wildcats deep. With the blessing of head coach Bo Pelini, Watson made the call.

"Like a good coordinator, I always go to Bo and make sure I've got the 51 percent," Watson said. "He gave me the thumbs up, we took the shot and it worked out really well."

Considering the way Nebraska's defense was playing, center Jacob Hickman said taking a two-TD lead less than two minutes in the second half was key.

"We knew we couldn't let them hang

around us and be within one touchdown of us," Hickman said. "We knew the best way to do it was come out right out of the half and score."

Paul, who had to adjust his route to catch Lee's slightly under-thrown pass, said he was simply looking to make another big play.

"Where ever Zac put it, I knew I was going to have to catch it," Paul said. "It definitely gave us a lot more momentum." **N**

— by Terry Douglass



SENIOR CELEBRATION

Small in numbers, the 13 members of Nebraska's senior class finished their home careers in a big way, winning the Big 12 Conference's North Division title with a 17-3 victory over Kansas State before a crowd of 85,998 at Memorial Stadium.

"It was a very emotional game for me," Nebraska senior safety **LARRY ASANTE** said. "It was my last tunnel walk and when I was walking down the tunnel for the last time, I was in tears.

"We had to get this victory for the senior class and we had to go out the right way. The right way was to win the Big 12 North."

Asante was joined in celebrating senior night by wide receiver **CHRIS BROOKS**, wide receiver **WES CAMMACK**, guard **ANDY CHRISTENSEN**, linebacker **PHILLIP DILLARD**, defensive end **DAVID HARVEY**,

center **JACOB HICKMAN**, wide receiver **MENELIK HOLT**, linebacker **COLTON KOEHLER**, guard **DEREK MEYER**, safety **MATT O'HANLON**, defensive tackle **NDAMUKONG SUH**, defensive end **BARRY TURNER**. Junior linebacker **BLAKE LAWRENCE** was honored with the senior class after opting to end his football career due to a series of concussions.

"I addressed the seniors as a group and I just told them, 'This is your last game in Memorial Stadium. Take a second to appreciate the crowd (and) go out there and enjoy it,'" Nebraska defensive coordinator Carl Pelini said. "I think they did."

The entire senior class served as game captains. Nebraska natives Cammack, Christensen, Koehler and Meyer represented the Huskers for the coin flip.

NO PEEKING

With the victory over Kansas State, Nebraska earned its fifth trip to the Big 12 championship game and will face South Division champion Texas at 7 p.m. on Dec. 5 at Dallas Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas. However, Cornhuskers' coach **BO PELINI** made it evident that he's not about to fast-forward past Friday's regular-season finale at Colorado.

"We'll enjoy tonight, but we have a short week ahead of us and a heck of a challenge at the end of this week, with a short week for us and a long week for (Colorado)," said Pelini, noting that the Buffaloes played their last game on Nov. 19. "It's an accomplishment to win the Big 12 North, but we want to make sure that we turn our focus now to Colorado."

PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN



PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN

QUICKLY

FAMILY AFFAIR

After winning his first North Division title in his second season as head coach, Nebraska's **BO PELINI** said he was pleased to be able to share the moment with his family, including his wife, **MARY PAT**.

"My family is everything to me," Pelini said. "They're excited. Believe me, I couldn't have success if it wasn't for my wife, my best friend, and the person who supports me, who allows me to do what I do."

"You have to be a pretty special woman to deal with me on a daily basis. My kids and my in-laws were here. I had a lot of friends here. It was a pretty special day for me."

WORTH NOTING

► Nebraska junior I-back **ROY HELU JR.** rushed 26 times for 95 yards. With his total, Helu recorded the 29th 1,000-yard rushing season in school history and has 1,057 rushing yards this season. Helu also became the 25th Husker with more than 2,000 career rushing yards, pushing his career total to 2,069.

► Senior safety **LARRY ASANTE** had a season-high 10 tackles against the Wildcats, increasing his career total to 209. Asante's total ties **TYRONE BYRD** (209) for third place all-time among Nebraska defensive backs. The only two defensive backs in school history with more career tackles are **MIKE BROWN** (287) and **DANIEL BULLOCKS** (226).

PUNTING PROWESS

Already regarded as the top place-kicker in the Big 12 Conference, Nebraska's **ALEX HENERY** has shown that he is also adept with accuracy on coffin-corner kicks as a punter.

Entering the Kansas State game with a league-leading 20 punts placed inside the opponents' 20-yard line, Henery added two more to his total against the Wildcats. And they were dandies as the junior pinned Kansas State at its own 1 with a 45-yard punt in the second quarter before launching a 61-yarder that was marked out at the KSU 3 early in the fourth quarter.

"We wanted him to hit it out at the half yard-line, so he's got to work on that a little bit, but we'll take it," Nebraska defensive coordinator **CARL PELINI** said. "He had a great game punting. He's such a weapon for us – as a punter and as a kicker. You can't say enough about him."

Henery said his coffin-corner success is a mixture of skill and fortunate bounces.

"It's a lot of luck and a lot of just working in practice and knowing how the ball is going to turn," Henery said. "With a spiral, it depends. A lot of it is trying to hit the ball

the way you want to, but some of it is also a little luck, too."

FOURTH-DOWN CALL

Facing a fourth-and-1 situation at their own 36-yard line with a 14-point lead and 2:34 to play, Nebraska's offensive linemen didn't want to give the ball back to Kansas State. After some persuading, Huskers' head coach **BO PELINI** and offensive coordinator **SHAWN WATSON** agreed.

Following a timeout, the Huskers' offense rushed out onto the field and quarterback **ZAC LEE** was able to pick up a first down to salt the game away on a 2-yard sneak.

"I'll tell you what: Our offensive line wanted it put on them and they wanted to get it," Watson said. "Bo and I both, we weren't going to veto that."

Watson said senior center **JACOB HICKMAN** lobbied the coaches the hardest.

"Jacob Hickman has been unbelievable in terms of his leadership this year and he was the one spearheading the moment over there on the sideline," Watson said. "I know that the entire offensive line really appreciated that opportunity to do that."



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ROY HELU JR. HEADS FOR THE END ZONE TO GIVE THE HUSKERS A 17-3 IN THE THIRD QUARTER. PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK

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NEBRASKA



KANSAS STATE



Left: Ndamukong Suh slows Kansas State QB Grant Gregory. [PHOTO BY SCOTT BRUHN] **Middle left:** Larry Asante tackles Brandon Banks in the first quarter. [PHOTO BY AARON BABCOCK] **Middle:** Coaching legends Tom Osborne and Bill Snyder shake hands before the game. [BRUHN]. **Below:** Tysyn Hartman picks off a pass in the end zone. [BABCOCK] **Bottom:** Shawn Watson and Latravis Washington react to play on the field. [PHOTO BY RANDY HAMPTON]



REPORT CARD

RUSHING:

Nebraska won, which is the bottom line. And **ROY HELU, JR.** went over 1,000 yards for the season. But even he didn't average 4 yards per carry. The Cornhuskers managed a net of just 101 yards on the ground, with the majority (71) coming in the second and third quarters.

PASSING:

ZAC LEE made a big third-down throw to **NILES PAUL** on the scoring drive to open the second half, after an ill-advised throw that was picked off late in the first half. Nebraska had a third-and-goal at the Kansas State 19-yard line, and Lee should have thrown the ball away.

RUSHING DEFENSE:

DANIEL THOMAS, the Big 12's leading rusher, managed 99 yards on 19 carries and never lost a yard. He was just under his per-game average of 106 rushing yards. The Wildcats couldn't consistently mount a rushing attack, however, and barely averaged 4 yards per carry.

PASSING DEFENSE:

Kansas State went into the game ranked No. 105 nationally in passing offense. The Wildcats managed a few big plays, and quarterback **GRANT GREGORY** missed some open receivers. But part of the reason was Nebraska's pressure, which produced four sacks.

KICKING/SPECIAL TEAMS:

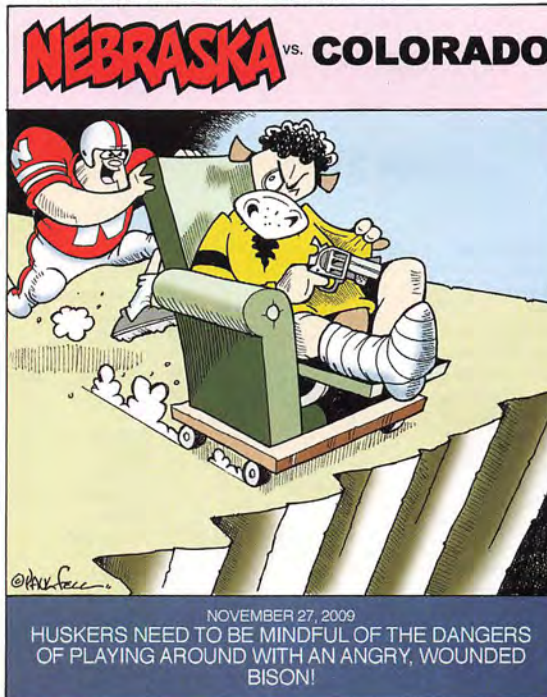
ALEX HENERY'S first punt, a 45-yarder, went out of bounds at the Kansas State 1-yard line. His fifth punt, a 61-yarder, went out of bounds at the Wildcats' 3-yard line. Coach **BO PELINI** also praised **ADI KUNALIC'S** kickoffs. Kansas State's **BRANDON BANKS** went into the game ranked sixth nationally in kickoff returns, four of which he had returned for touchdowns..

FAN OF THE GAME



Gunnery Sgt. Mike Beck, Omaha, salutes during the National Anthem. [PHOTO BY RANDY HAMPTON]

THE PAUL FELL PREDICTION



QUICK PICKS



Aaron Babcock
(59-27/6-2)



Mike Babcock
(61-25/6-2)



Sean Callahan
(57-29/7-1)



John Talman
(56-30/6-2)



Matt Davison
(63-23/7-1)

(Season/Last Week)	Aaron Babcock (59-27/6-2)	Mike Babcock (61-25/6-2)	Sean Callahan (57-29/7-1)	John Talman (56-30/6-2)	Matt Davison (63-23/7-1)
Nebraska at Colorado	NU 28-17	NU 35-21	NU 27-20	NU 24-14	NU 17-7
Texas at Texas A&M	UT 49-10	UT 49-17	UT 45-23	UT 27-17	UT 28-10
Oklahoma State at Oklahoma	OU 28-27	OSU 38-28	OU 27-23	OSU 28-27	OSU 35-10
Missouri vs. Kansas	MU 24-21	MU 31-24	KU 38-34	MU 34-28	KU 24-20
Texas Tech vs. Baylor	TT 42-17	TT 42-28	TT 45-17	TT 42-21	TT 21-10
Alabama at Auburn	BAMA 20-17	BAMA 24-20	BAMA 30-17	BAMA 28-13	AUB 17-10
Georgia at Georgia Tech	GT 30-24	GT 35-21	GT 45-34	GT 38-20	UGA 21-20
Notre Dame at Stanford	STAN 35-14	STAN 49-27	STAN 41-38	STAN 31-10	ND 21-20

GameStats

SUMMARY

SCORING

Nov. 21, 2009
Memorial Stadium • Lincoln, Neb.
Attendance: 85,998

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Tot
Kansas State	3	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	3	7	7	0	17

	KSU	NU
First Quarter		
KS Cherry 44-yard Field Goal 09:26 Drive: 10 plays 58 yds 5:34	3	0
NU Henery 34-yard Field Goal 01:44 Drive: 16 plays 56 yds 7:37	3	3
Second Quarter		
NU McNeill Pass from Lee 17-yards (Henery Kick) 12:02 Drive: 7 plays 57 yds 2:46	3	10
Third Quarter		
NU Helu jr. 14-yard Run (Henery Kick) 13:21 Drive: 4 plays 70 yds 1:33	3	17

TEAM STATS

	KSU	NU
Total First Downs	19	19
Rushing	9	7
Passing	7	9
Penalty	3	3
Rushing Attempts	34	45
Yards Gained Rushing	170	150
Yards Lost Rushing	30	49
Net Yards Rushing	140	101
Net Yards Passing	153	166
Passes Attempted	33	19
Passes Completed	12	13
Had Intercepted	1	1
Percent Completion	36.4%	68.4%
Yards per Attempt	4.6	8.7
Yards per Completion	12.8	12.8
Total Offensive Plays	67	64
Total Net Yards	293	267
Avg. Gain Per Play	4.4	4.2
Fumbles: No-Lost	3-1	0-0
Penalties: No-Yards	7-69	3-34
Punts: No-Yards	5-197	6-273
Avg. Per Punt	39.4	45.5
Avg. Net Punt	38.8	41.0
Punt Returns: No-Yards	2-27	2-3
Kickoff Returns: No-Yards	3-50	2-53
Interception Returns: No-Yards	1-42	1-0
Fumble Returns: No-Yards	0-0	1-4
Miscellaneous Yards	0	0
Possession Time	28:30	31:30
Third-Down Conversions	3-14	7-16
Percentage	21.4%	43.8%
Fourth-Down Conversions	1-2	1-1
Percentage	50.0%	100.0%
Sacks By: No-Yards	2-24	4-30

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

NEBRASKA

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Helu Jr.	26	105	10	95	3.7	1	18
Burkhead	6	21	4	17	2.8	0	7
Lee	11	24	29	-5	-0.5	0	5
TEAM	2	0	6	-6	-3.0	0	0
Total	45	150	49	101	2.2	1	18

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Lee	19	13	68.4	1	166	1	47
Total	19	13	68.4	1	166	1	47

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	4	82	0	47
McNeill	3	26	1	17
Kinnie	2	20	0	11
Legate	1	13	0	13
Burkhead	1	9	0	9
Cooper	1	8	0	8
Young	1	8	0	8
Total	13	166	1	47

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Paul	2	3	0	2
Total	2	3	0	2

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Marlowe	2	53	0	28
Total	2	53	0	28

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Henery	6	45.5	61	0	1	0	2	2
Total	6	45.5	61	0	1	0	2	2

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Henery	1	1	34	0
Total	1	1	34	0

Defense	Tac	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Asante	4	6	10	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Suh	4	5	9	1.5-6	1.5-6	2	0	0
Dillard	6	2	8	1-9	1-9	1	1	0
Crick	1	4	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Gomes	3	2	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
O'Hanlon	2	3	5	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Hagg	3	1	4	1-14	1-14	2	0	0
Amukamara	1	2	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	1
Turner	0	3	3	0.5-1	0.5-1	0	0	0
West	3	0	3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Allen	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Compton	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	1	0	0
Fisher	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Henery	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
May	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Meredith	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Paul	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Smith	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Stoddard	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Steinkuler	0	0	0	0-0	0-0	1	0	0

Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Asante	1	0	0	0
Total	1	0	0	0

KANSAS STATE

Rushing	No	Gain	Lost	Net	Avg	TD	Lg
Thomas	19	99	0	99	5.2	0	24
Gregory	13	52	30	22	1.7	0	13
Banks	1	18	0	18	18.0	0	9
Valentine	1	1	0	1	1.0	0	1
Total	34	170	30	140	4.1	0	24

Passing	Att	Comp	%	Int	Yds	TD	Lg
Gregory	31	11	35.5	1	126	0	24
Klein	1	1	100.0	0	27	0	27
Team	1	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Total	33	12	36.4	1	153	0	27

Receiving	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Thomas	4	51	0	27
Banks	5	48	0	16
Valentine	2	30	0	18
Snipes	1	24	0	24
Total	12	153	0	27

Punt Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Banks	2	27	0	22
Total	2	27	0	22

Kick Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Banks	3	50	0	19
Total	3	50	0	19

Punting	No	Avg	Lg	Blk	TB	FC	50+	In 20
Doerr	2	41.5	51	0	0	1	1	0
Fulhage	3	38.0	51	0	0	2	1	1
Total	5	39.4	51	0	0	3	2	1

Field Goals	Made	Att	Lg	Blkd
Cherry	1	3	44	0
Total	1	3	44	0

Defense	Tac	Asst	Tot	TFL	Sac	PD	FF	FR
Pomele	6	9	15	2-5	0-0	0	0	0
Fitzgerald	5	3	8	1.5-14	1-14	0	0	0
Lamur	6	1	7	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Moore	3	4	7	1-10	1-10	1	0	0
Calvin	1	5	6	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Houlik	5	1	6	1-4	0-0	0	0	0
Felder	1	4	5	1.5-4	0-0	0	0	0
Harrison	4	1	5	1-1	0-0	1	0	0
Childs	2	2	4	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0
Brown	0	2	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Butler	2	0	2	1-3	0-0	0	0	0
Sweeney	1	1	2	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Banks	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Brown	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Guidry	0	1	1	0.5-1	0-0	0	0	0
Hartman	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Herndon	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Rohleder	0	1	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Tannahill	1	0	1	0-0	0-0	0	0	0

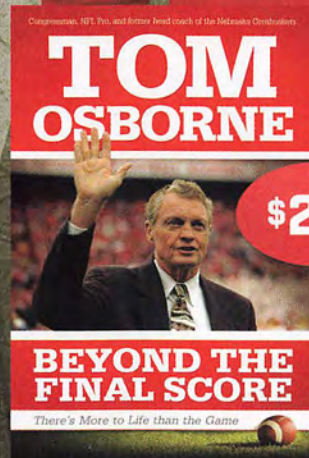
Interception Ret	No	Yds	TD	Lg
Hartman	1	42	0	42
Total	1	42	0	42



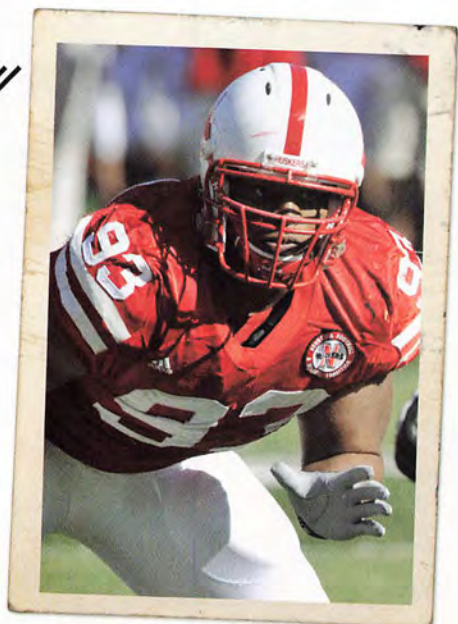
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Jacob Hickman contemplates becoming a college football coach someday.

If that's the career path the Nebraska senior center ultimately chooses, he'll be able to draw upon four years of observing the inner workings of two distinctly different coaching staffs.

"There's a few different ways you can look at it," Hickman said. "I learned from a lot of different coaching styles, from a lot of people who know the game of

football. From that, I can kind of piece together what works for me.

"It's also helped me in my personal play from knowing so many different styles. And in life in general, with all the changes I've seen in the program, it kind of sets you up for just about anything that can happen later in life.

"You definitely see how it could help you out in the future."

Of course, Hickman, along with a dozen other Nebraska seniors in their

SENIOR DOZEN

by STEVE SIPPLE



final seasons (injured senior Rickey Thenarse hopes to return next season after receiving a medical redshirt), is focused on finishing this season on a strong note.

Of the 14 Husker seniors, all but one – reserve offensive lineman Derek Meyer, a transfer from Kansas State – played at least one season under former Nebraska head coach Bill Callahan.

Callahan was fired following the 2007 season, replaced by current head coach Bo Pelini.

“Obviously, they’ve done a lot for the program,” Pelini said of the seniors. “They’ve worked hard. They’ve stayed committed. I like their approach and have a lot of respect for them.”

Callahan, who had a record of 27-22 at Nebraska from 2004-07, was amazing

“Unfortunately, you can only do so much on the computer. With some of the

the only two full-time holdovers from the Callahan administration, offensive coordinator Shawn Watson and recruiting coordinator-wide receivers coach Ted Gilmore.

After being hired as Nebraska’s head coach on Dec. 2, 2007, Pelini hired a new crew of defensive coaches.

“With this staff, I’ve definitely learned that character is a big part of being a teammate and trust is also a big part of being a teammate, and having a great team chemistry,” said Husker senior middle linebacker Phillip Dillard, who has enjoyed a breakout season in 2009 after struggling for much of his career with injuries and other issues.

“I learned how to be patient and wait for the time to come,” he said. “This staff taught me that when the time comes, you have to take advantage of it – you have to do what you can.”

When Callahan, a highly-regarded

“They’ve worked hard. They’ve stayed committed. I like their approach and have a lot of respect for them.”

Head Coach Bo Pelini

with the X’s and O’s part of coaching, Hickman said.

“I mean, the guy was a genius in that regard,” Hickman said.

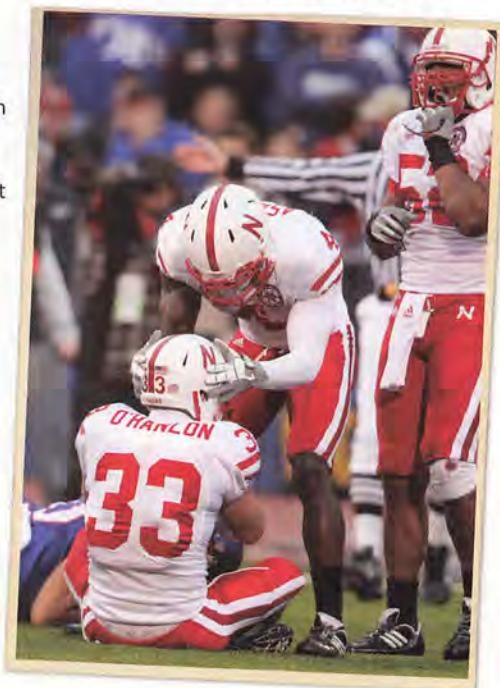
personnel stuff – the human part – he didn’t always respond well, I guess.”

Pelini’s staff “definitely has the human element part,” Hickman said. “You know they care about you as a player.”

Hickman pledged to join Callahan and his staff never considering the possibility that those coaches might not be around when Hickman finished his college playing career.

“But you don’t just pledge to the staff, you pledge to the program,” Hickman said. “I came here because of the tradition and everything Nebraska had to offer.”

For the past two seasons, Hickman has enjoyed the benefit of playing for a Nebraska offensive coaching staff that includes



offensive technician, was fired after Nebraska finished 5-7 in 2007, offense wasn't the issue. The Huskers finished that season ranked ninth nationally in total offense, averaging 468.3 yards per game.

However, Nebraska's defense was a major issue, having experienced a horrific 2007. The Huskers finished 112th in total defense (476.8) and 114th in average points allowed (37.9). There were significant defensive meltdowns in no fewer than five losses, including a horrendous 76-39 defeat at Kansas.

Pelini's impact on the defense was immediate. The Huskers jumped to 55th nationally in total defense (349.9) in 2008 while finishing with a 9-4 record,

**"We're able
to go out
there and
just play.
We're flying
to the ball."**

Phillip Dillard

including four consecutive triumphs to end the season.

This season, Nebraska entered its Nov. 21 game against Kansas State ranked 10th in total defense (280.1) and third in both points allowed (11.0) and passing efficiency defense.

Dillard says Pelini ushered in dramatic changes defensively.

"There's a lot more intensity – everybody playing with intensity and passion for the game, and knowing what they're supposed to do on the field, and being able to rely on the other 10 guys to do their jobs," Dillard said. "We're able to go out there and just play. We're flying to the ball."

Added senior safety Larry Asante, "I just think guys are holding each other accountable now. We play team defense. It's a sound defense. Pretty much every guy has an assignment. If there's a person out of line, the whole picture falls apart. I just think we now have faith

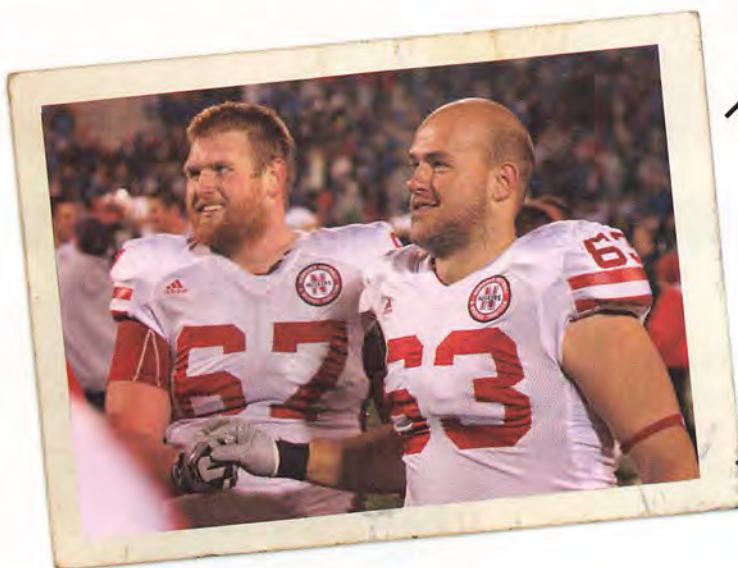


in each other, and we know each individual is going to take care of his assignments. And that's why we're playing better team defense."

Dillard says Nebraska has a close senior class.

"It helps a lot," he said. "We're all together. We're all brothers."

Their bond was formed during one of the most tumultuous periods in recent program history. And as is the case with essentially all senior classes, many of the Husker veterans endured their share of personal hardships, including the bell cow of the 2009 senior class, defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh.



Suh was among a school-record 13 true freshmen to see action in 2005, playing in the first two games before missing the remainder of the season after undergoing knee surgery. He had his breakout season in 2008 and continues to play at an All-America level.

Hickman, who squares off against Suh in practice, has more experience than any other Husker offensive player, with 30-plus career starts to his credit.

He's clearly enjoying his final few weeks in the program, his final few weeks observing a coaching staff hard at work.

"These guys are here all day, every day," Hickman said of the coaches. "I've

talked about the coaching profession with my wife, and she's like, 'There's no way I'd let you coach.' Actually, she'd support me either way.

"I like the idea of coaching," he

"I love the chess game of football. It's fascinating to me. It's something I could see myself doing."

Jacob Hickman

said. "I like to talk to the younger guys on the team. I love the chess game of football. It's fascinating to me. It's something I could see myself doing."

The dramatic changes he encountered in the program could help prepare him for life, whether he coaches or not, he said. "You might change your job or change bosses.

"It teaches you a lot about who you're going to be and what you can do."



Recruiting Notebook

Spots filling up in 2010 recruiting class

BY SEAN STEVENS

With 16 commits, Nebraska has few slots left for the 2010 recruiting class. Only 13 scholarship seniors will graduate, and junior **BLAKE LAWRENCE** will be on medical scholarship. While it is unrealistic to expect every signed recruit to qualify academically, as was the case in 2009, and there is also likely to be some natural attrition as players currently on scholarship feel that they are not likely to see the field much and choose to transfer, it's unlikely that Nebraska will sign more than 20 prospects in February. Who are the most likely to fill the remaining slots?

Wide receiver **AUSTIN HILL** (6-3, 192, 3 stars) is high on the list. His teammate **JOSHUA MITCHELL** (5-11, 165, 3 stars) is already committed to the Huskers.

Hill's reaction after his visit for the Oklahoma game could not have been more positive.

"I mean, just everything was awesome, everything," Hill said. "The whole game, I was really impressed. I didn't come into it thinking that way (about committing). I mean, everything stacks up pretty well. Nebraska is probably one of the top."

As a senior, Hill had 41 catches for 1,046 yards and nine touchdowns through mid-November. He may still visit Arizona and Northwestern, and the NU coaching staff did not pressure him to commit.

"They were all pretty relaxed," Hill said. "They told me to take my time and if I was thinking about a commitment, that I could tell them whenever I decided. I mean I'm probably not (deciding) until after I've taken all the visits I'm going to take."

Safety **COREY COOPER** (6-2, 203, 4 stars) of Maywood, Ill., Proviso East is another possible Husker pledge. Cooper committed to the home-state Illini in April of 2008 but



has officially visited both Notre Dame and Nebraska this fall.

Seeing Nebraska in person and talking with the coaching staff gave Cooper some idea of what to expect if he were to choose the Huskers.

"They were just telling me that they're losing their starting safeties, since they're seniors, and I would have an opportunity to come in and play," Cooper explained. "They told me how important the safeties are to their defense, with calling the checks. They're real active. That's an important position on defense, so I could come in and compete."

Arizona, Tennessee, and Miami are all trip possibilities before Cooper makes a choice.

"[Nebraska] is pretty high," he said. "I'm definitely giving them consideration. I didn't plan on going there and making a commitment. I wanted to take these visits; when I get done, I'll make a decision."

The highest ranked prospect who will visit Nebraska this fall is defensive end **OWAMAGBE ODIGHIZUWA** (6-3, 234, 5 stars) of Portland, Ore., Douglas. Odighizuwa has taken official trips to UCLA and California, along with unofficial visits to Oregon and Oregon State.

"I have Nebraska, Florida and USC still to visit," Odighizuwa said. "I will go to Nebraska on November 21st, then I go to Florida for the Florida State game (November 28th) and USC sometime in December. I will then make my mind up and then announce my decision during the U.S. Army All-American game."

Ranked as the No. 20 player at all positions nationally, Odighizuwa plays in the same city as Nebraska's most nationally-known player. "I like Nebraska's defensive line coach (John Papuchis)," Odighizuwa said. "I like what they have done with Portland native, **NDAMUKONG SUH**."

It's a tough battle for Odighizuwa's commitment, but Suh will definitely play a part.

Another option at safety is **DERRICK MALONE** (6-3, 195, 3 stars) of Colton, Calif. Malone was also in Lincoln for the Oklahoma game. Colton High head coach **HAROLD STRAUSS** said that Malone's eyes were definitely opened on his trip.

"I think he was just taken aback by everything about it. He enjoyed the coaches a lot; he enjoyed the food a lot," Strauss said laughing. "He thought the kids were extremely friendly. He just said it was a good time, and it was kind of amazing they

all knew who he was."

Malone won't decide yet, planning to visit Washington, Arizona State, and Oregon.

Athlete **TEJAY JOHNSON** (6-2, 190, 3 stars) of Egg Harbor Township, N.J., could play either defensive back or wide receiver. His trip to Lincoln in September went very well.

"I loved it. It's a great place to be," Johnson said. "The coaches are wonderful, and the academics are great. They have a 94-percent graduation rate for their athletes, which is exceptional."

"The atmosphere was like nothing I thought it would be," he continued. "Being from New Jersey, I thought Nebraska would be cold and deserted with nothing to do. I really enjoyed myself."

Johnson has visits to Cincinnati and Rutgers, with Michigan State making a late run.

"Now I know everything they're about. (His player hosts) Lazarri (Middleton) and P.J. (Smith) told me that you get a little homesick at first . . . which is natural being away from home. After a while though, they said you'll never want to leave."

NEBRASKA'S OFFICIAL VISITS

NAME	POS.	HT	WT	DATE	COMMIT
Tyler Evans	ATH	6-2	180	11/21	Nebraska
Tyler Gabbert	QB	6-0	190	11/21	Nebraska
Owamagbe	DE	6-3	234	11/21	
Odighizuwa					
Damon Williams	DT	6-4	300	11/21	
Corey Cooper	DB	6-2	203	11/6	Illinois
Jay Guy	DT	6-1	300	11/7	Nebraska
Austin Hill	WR	6-3	192	11/7	
Derrick Malone	DB	5-11	165	11/7	
Joshua Mitchell	DB	5-11	165	11/7	Nebraska
Harold Mobley	ATH	6-4	225	11/7	
Tobi Okuyemi	DE	6-3	250	11/7	Nebraska
Tyler Slavin	WR	6-2	182	11/7	
Giovanni Bernard	RB	5-9	198	10/24	Notre Dame
Curtis Carter	ATH	5-10	161	10/17	Nebraska
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	10/17	Nebraska
Andre Hal	DB	6-0	170	10/17	Vanderbilt
Derron Smith	DB	5-11	173	10/17	
Ciante Evans	DB	5-11	170	9/26	Nebraska
Chase Harper	TE	6-6	248	9/26	
Joshua Reese	WR	6-1	182	9/26	
Chase Rome	DE	6-3	290	9/26	Nebraska
Bud Sasser	WR	6-3	200	9/26	
Bobby Swigert	WR	6-1	175	9/26	Boston College
Colin Tanigawa	OL	6-3	286	9/26	Washington
Willis Wright	WR	6-2	185	9/26	
Harvey Jackson	DB	6-2	185	9/5	Nebraska
Tejay Johnson	ATH	6-2	190	9/5	
Mike Moudy	OL	6-7	291	9/5	Nebraska
Donovan Vestal	DE	6-5	240	9/5	Nebraska



IN STATE SPOTLIGHT

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

At 6-foot-3, 195 pounds, Lincoln Southwest wide receiver **JORDAN TYRANCE** is getting more than his share of looks from college recruiters. Tyrance is the son of former Nebraska linebacker Pat Tyrance, and Huskers Illustrated caught up with him for this week's in-state recruiting spotlight.

CALLAHAN: Your dad played at both Nebraska and in the NFL as a linebacker. What's the best football story he's ever told you?

TYRANCE: I would have to say when he was in high school at Millard North. He always talks about how after games opposing coaches would talk about how hard he played. At tight end, he would push people 15 or 20 yards down the field. He just said he enjoyed that and enjoyed working hard.

CALLAHAN: You started your high school career out at Class D Parkview Christian in Lincoln. What was it like for you transitioning into Class A?

TYRANCE: I had to get used to playing with six extra people on the field, because they were an eight-man school. It was a pretty tough transition. The games themselves got a little faster, and we practiced a lot more.

CALLAHAN: You played basketball for the Nebraska Bison AAU program this summer. How fun of an experience was that for you and what's the best story from the road you have?

TYRANCE: It was great. A lot of the guys I got to play with are some of the best players in Nebraska. It was fun to go out there and compete with them. We made some pretty long runs in tournaments. People weren't expecting us to do that, because when you think of Nebraska, you don't think of basketball. It was great going to Las Vegas. There was just so much going on. I had never been there, but I'd seen pictures before. As a team we went down there and we played in some pretty tough games. We ended up losing to the team that took second in the entire tournament.

CALLAHAN: Who's your favorite professional sports athlete to cheer for and why?

TYRANCE: Football wise its Adrian Peterson. He's just so intense all the time. You hear how hard he practices and it really shows up in games. Basketball wise its Dwyane Wade. I enjoy watching him. I like how he never gives up. He's been through several injuries in his career, and the last couple of years he's trained hard to get back. He did great in the Olympics, and he's a top-five scorer in the league.

CALLAHAN: Name for me a song that makes you sing out loud and bang on your steering wheel every time you hear it?

TYRANCE: "Watcha Say" by Jason DeRulo.

Recruiting Notebook

Harper, Cotton commit to Huskers

by Mike Matya

After garnering three immediate commitments from official visitors after the Oklahoma game, Nebraska added two more verbal pledges to its 2010 recruiting class in short order. One was expected, and one came seemingly out of the blue.

The surprise commitment was from Lincoln, Neb., Southeast's **JAKE COTTON**. The 6-foot-7, 265-pound lineman joins his father and Husker offensive line coach, Barney Cotton, and older brother and current NU redshirted freshman tight end, Ben, in playing for the Huskers.

The younger Cotton said he received a scholarship offer from Nebraska "about three or four weeks ago" and he "committed two days after" that.

"They told me they wanted me in the

program and everything for the weeks leading up to it," Jake Cotton said of the offer. "I took a few days to think about it because I wasn't sure if I wanted to stay in town and stuff, but after thinking about it, it was closer to family and for my dad to see me play."

Cotton played offensive tackle for Southeast this season, and he played tight end on last year's team. Defensively, he was a defensive end as a junior, but because of an injury, he moved inside to defensive tackle for this season.

On the collegiate level, he could project to either side of the ball.

"They're bringing me in as an athlete because they don't know if I'll play d-end

or d-tackle," Cotton said. "I don't want to say there isn't a chance of [offensive line], but right now they want me as a defensive player."



The expected verbal pledge came from Corsicana, Texas, Navarro junior college tight end **CHASE HARPER**. The 6-6, 248-pounder will come to Nebraska with three years of eligibility to play three seasons.

Though tight end isn't a position of need for this year's recruiting class, Navarro coach **NICK BOBECK** believes Harper would bring something special to the table in the Huskers' offensive attack.

"They've got some packages where they have two or three tight ends on the field at a time," Bobeck said. "Really, it's up to Chase how much he's used and how they use him."

Though he had offers from the likes of Miami and several other Big 12 schools, Harper is a solid commit for the Huskers. "He's going to stick," Bobeck said. "He's done. He knows that's a great place for him, with the use of tight ends and such up there." **N**

2010 Nebraska Commitment List (16)

Name (Rivals.com ranking)	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Walker Ashburn ★★	DE	6-3	245	River Ridge, La. (John Curtis)
Curtis Carter ★★	ATH	5-10	161	Stonewall, La. (North De Soto)
Jake Cotton	ATH	6-7	265	Lincoln, Neb. (Southeast)
Quincy Enunwa	WR	6-2	200	Moreno Valley, Calif. (Rancho Verde)
Ciante Evans ★★	CB	5-11	170	Arlington, Texas (Juan Seguin)
Tyler Evans ★★	ATH	6-2	180	Waverly, Neb. (Waverly)
Tyler Gabbert ★★	QB	6-0	190	Ballwin, Mo. (Parkway West)
Jay Guy ★★	DT	6-1	300	Aldine, Texas (Eisenhower)
Chase Harper ★★	TE	6-6	248	Corsicana, Texas (Navarro JC)
Harvey Jackson ★★	DB	6-2	185	Missouri City, Texas (Hightower)
Joshua Mitchell ★★	DB	5-11	165	Corona, Calif. (Eleanor Roosevelt)
Mike Moudy ★★	OL	6-7	291	Castle Rock, Colo. (Douglas County)
Tobi Okuyemi ★★	DE	6-3	250	Plymouth, Minn. (Wayzata)
Andrew Rodriguez ★★	OT	6-6	300	Aurora, Neb. (Aurora)
Chase Rome ★★	DE	6-3	290	Columbia, Mo. (Rock Bridge)
Donovan Vestal ★★	DE	6-5	240	Arlington, Texas (Bowie)

2011 Nebraska Commitment List (2)

Name	Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Hometown (School)
Tyler Moore	OL	6-6	290	Clearwater, Fla. (Countryside)
Ryne Reeves	OL	6-3	286	Crete, Neb. (Crete)



DEEP IN THE HEART OF TEXAS

BY JOHN TALMAN
RECRUITING PUBLISHER,
HUSKERSILLUSTRATED.COM

What can Suh do for NU?

AS THE CONFERENCE schedule comes to an end for Nebraska and the recruiting class for 2010 fills up, I think it's important to note just how important star defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh has been for Nebraska.

I don't mean so much about what he's done on the field. I mean that's obvious and I'm not going to bore people listing statistics. It's not going to do a lot of good to say how important he was in key games like on the road at Missouri or at the tail end of the 2008 season against Colorado.

What I think people miss is how important he has been for recruiting.

Take the Oklahoma-visit weekend for example.

The defensive performance as a whole for the Huskers was incredibly impressive. I don't want to take anything away from the top performances by the secondary, key plays by linebackers like Phillip Dillard, or the other defensive linemen that seldom get the credit Suh does.

But, it was obvious when talking with Aldine, Texas, Eisenhower defensive tackle Jay Guy, who committed to the Huskers on the visit, that he was very aware of Big Suh. He was aware of not just Suh's talent, but also what Bo Pelini and Carl Pelini have done with him and the entire defensive line.

You felt the same way when talking to defensive end Tobi Okuyemi. The top Minnesota prospect came to Lincoln and

he wasn't exactly voted the most likely to commit by the fans – figuratively of course. However, Sunday evening, he'd seen enough. He'd seen all he needed to see of Suh and the defensive line to know that this was a place he can be successful in the front four.

Previous Husker defensive line commits such as Donovan Vestal knew it, too.

What does it do in the long-term and into the class of 2011?

It's not a real stretch to say that Suh will probably haul in enough post-season awards to at least fill a bookcase. On top of that, you've got a defensive tackle that writers and sports-talk radio show hosts are saying deserves consideration for the Heisman Trophy.

Guess what? In this day and age of instant information and the Internet, prospects are hovering over the World Wide Web now more than ever, researching teams to decide where they'll suit up for the next four years.

For those top defensive linemen out there who are in their junior years and starting to feel the heat of an ever-growing list of college options, Suh puts Nebraska in a position to compete with anybody.

Let's add something else that also rarely gets mentioned.

Suh isn't just a football player, but he's also a well-spoken young man who chooses his words carefully and communicates directly with the media. Having read tons

of fan comments about Suh's interaction with kids wanting his autograph and fans just wanting to say a few words to him, all have been positive.

It's unfair to categorize Suh as just a great football player, when it's obvious he's been a great ambassador for Nebraska's resurgent Blackshirt defense under Bo Pelini.

His high expectations and hard work are other reasons he puts Nebraska in a great position to lure top defensive line recruits to Lincoln. Those recruits see what he's done, and it's obvious many are intrigued with the prospect of trying to fill those shoes.

And last but certainly not least, this has to be mentioned.

Going in the early portion of the 2009 NFL Draft, as everybody seems to be projecting Suh to do, won't hurt either.

Not all high school prospects look at college as an entry to the professional ranks. But many have those dreams, and they want to be in a position to get there if it's possible. If you're a defensive lineman, it's fairly obvious that prospects have seen the nationwide praise of Suh and Pelini's defense.

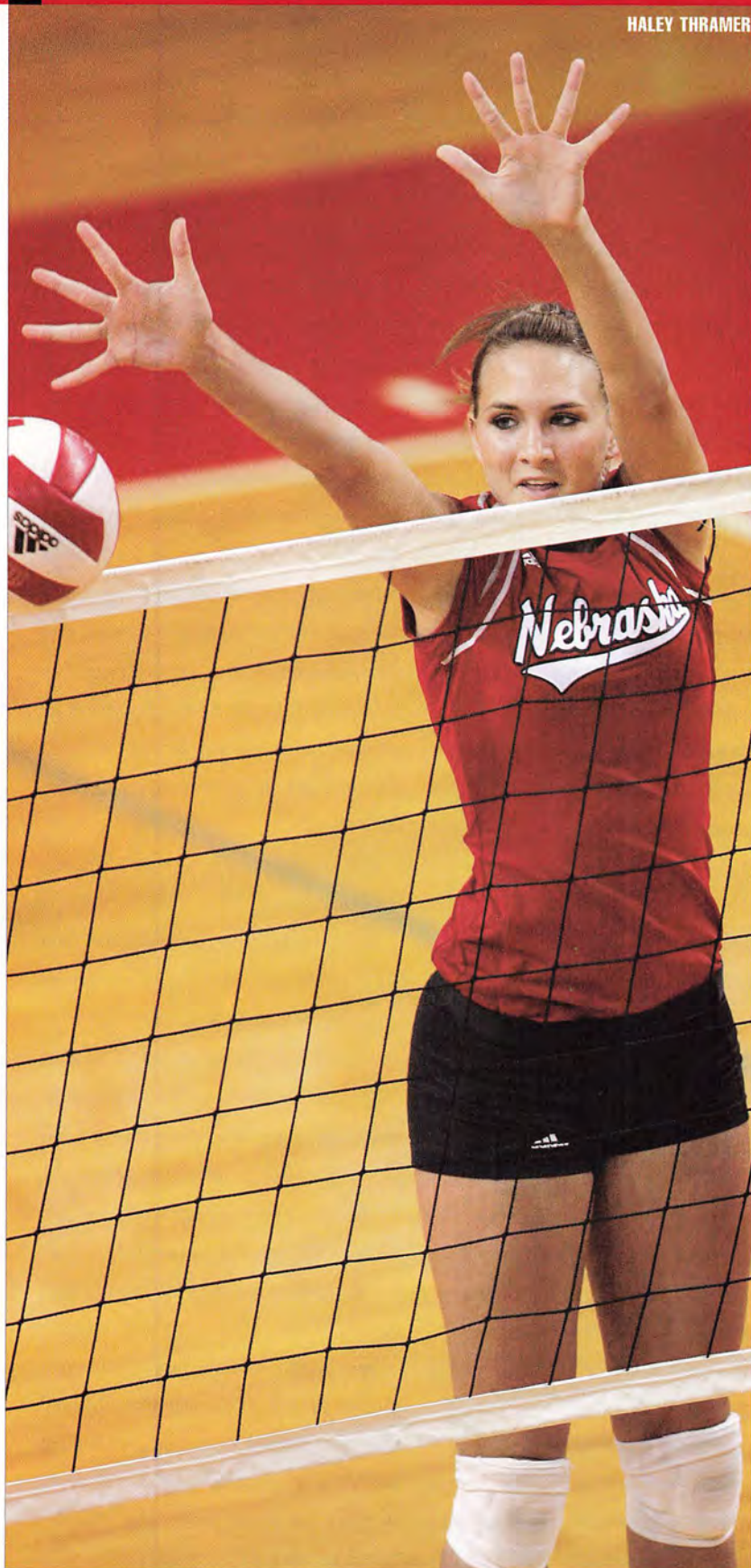
So on Senior Day, when Suh went through the tunnel one last time, it should have been good to know that even though he's done playing there, he's still going to make an impact down the road for Nebraska's football program. **N**

Volleyball

HALEY THRAMER

BY BOB HAMAR

Thramer excelling in block school



Haley Thramer has yet to play an official volleyball match for the University of Nebraska, but she's already impressed Husker coach John Cook.

Thramer, a freshman from Ewing, Neb., is redshirting this season even though Cook says she could play for the Huskers right now.

"There are days I'm tempted to pull her out of her redshirt," Cook said. "We're really excited about what she's done."

What Thramer has done so far is the equivalent of attending blocking school. She goes to all the practices, goes through all the drills and tries to soak in as much information as she can.

Thramer's Ewing team was 91-4 in her four seasons there with two state runner-up finishes and a 36-0 record with a D-2 state championship her senior year. Thramer had 438 kills with a .515 hitting efficiency and 110 blocks for that season alone.

But there was still a lot for the 6-foot-2 middle blocker to learn.

"In high school I thought I knew quite a bit, then I came down here and started playing club volleyball and I knew I had a lot more to catch onto," Thramer said. "Just being in club the last two years has really helped me transition into

playing at Nebraska."

That transition has gone smoothly so far. Cook even compares her to former NU All-American Melissa Elmer, who was one of the best blockers in NCAA volleyball history.

"She was a big role model for me," Thrasher said of Elmer. "It's a big role to step into, but I'm willing to take the challenge. She was a great player. I'll strive to be like her any day."

Thrasher is already ahead of Elmer in some ways. Elmer couldn't even go through drills during her redshirt season because she couldn't simulate what the Huskers needed to see. That's not a problem for Thrasher.

"She does an awesome job, and she gets worked," Cook said. "She's in block school. Even though it's not game-like, she's getting a lot of great training, and that's exactly what she needs."

Now the season is nearly over, and Thrasher can't believe it. She expected the year might drag along, but it hasn't.

"It's been great," Thrasher said. "I was just talking to my parents about how fast it's flown by, just the year in general. I can't believe the season is almost over and it seems like it just started. I figured being redshirted might be a little tougher than it really has been for me."

Thrasher moved to Lincoln on May 17 and started classes the next day. She also stayed busy with summer workouts that included a fair amount of weight lifting.

That lifting has paid off. Thrasher has put on several pounds of muscle in the past year.

"It's been a ridiculous change," Thrasher said. "Any time I go home people are like, 'Oh my gosh, you look amazing now. You finally put some muscle on your bones.'"

Cook is certainly expecting Thrasher to play next season. She could have played this season, but the Huskers were deep

at middle blocker, and Cook knows how difficult it can be for a freshman to play right out of high school. The redshirt season will benefit both Thrasher and the Husker program down the road.

"They come in here all this and all that, but they're still freshmen," Cook said. "They expect to be great the first day they're out there. There is a process they go through. All those players, even though they're great in high school, it's an adjustment. That's why I would like to redshirt every freshman."

BANWARTH DIGGING IT

Junior libero Kayla Banwarth has moved into fifth place on the single-season digs list at Nebraska. She is also one of only two players -- along with Jennifer Saleaumua -- to have multiple 400-dig seasons.

Cook said Banwarth has a bigger impact on games now because she's a more confident player and reads things better. He also wants the block up front to give Banwarth a chance to make plays in the back row.

"We're trying to channel the ball to her, and that's what we're trying to get them to understand," Cook said. "Don't let them hit off your block. Give Kayla a chance to make the dig because if it goes to Kayla, she has a great chance of digging it."

STRONG IN THE MIDDLE

Cook has been pleasantly surprised with the play of middle blockers Kori Cooper and Brooke Delano. The Huskers have gotten more out of those two players than he ever expected this season.

"I didn't think we would be as effective at the middle blocker position," Cook said. "Both Brooke and Kori are at the top of the Big 12 in attack percentage. Brooke is second in blocking. That, to me, was the biggest question mark."

TWO POINTS BETTER

The Huskers have lost their share of close sets this season. At least it seems that way.

But as of Nov. 16, NU had played just 12 sets decided by two points and was 8-4 in those 12 sets. Cook credits conditioning coach Laura Pilakowski with getting the Huskers ready for sets like that.

"All summer in their conditioning with Laura, they get hounded on two more points, two points better," Cook said. "We know when we get in these big games and play these great teams, it comes down to two-point games, so we want to be two points better." **N**

2009 VOLLEYBALL SCHEDULE

Aug. 22	Red/White Scrimmage, 7 p.m.
Aug. 28-29	Runza/AVCA Showcase
Aug. 28	*vs. Michigan, L, 3-0
Aug. 29	*vs. Minnesota, W, 3-2
Sept. 1	Creighton, W, 3-0
Sept. 4-5	at LSU Tournament
Sept. 4	vs. UL-Lafayette, W, 3-0
	at LSU, W, 3-2
Sept. 5	vs. Tulane, W, 3-0
Sept. 10-13	Ameritas Players Challenge
Sept. 10	Virginia, W, 3-0
Sept. 11	BYU, W, 3-1
Sept. 13	^UCLA, L, 3-2
Sept. 16	Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Sept. 19	at Colorado, W, 3-0
Sept. 23	at Texas A&M, L, 3-2
Sept. 30	at Oklahoma, W, 3-0
Oct. 7	Kansas, W, 3-0
Oct. 10	Kansas State, W, 3-0
Oct. 14	at Baylor, W, 3-0
Oct. 17	at Missouri, W, 3-1
Oct. 21	Iowa State, L, 3-2
Oct. 24	Oklahoma, W, 3-1
Oct. 28	at Texas Tech, W, 3-0
Oct. 30	at Texas, L, 3-0
Nov. 4	Missouri, W, 3-0
Nov. 7	at Iowa State, W, 3-0
Nov. 13	Texas A&M, W, 3-0
Nov. 18	Baylor, W, 3-0
Nov. 21	at Kansas, 6:30 p.m.
Nov. 25	at Kansas State, 7 p.m.
Nov. 28	Colorado, 7 p.m.
Dec. 4-5	NCAA 1st/2nd Rounds, TBA
Dec. 11-12	*NCAA Regionals, TBA
Dec. 17	NCAA Semifinals, Finals
	* at Qwest Center, Omaha
	^ at Bob Devaney Sports Center

Basketball

CHRISTIAN STANHARDINGER

BY BRIAN ROSENTHAL

Countdown is on for Stanhardinger

Christian Standhardinger is already starting the countdown.

On the Nebraska freshman's locker is a schedule of the Huskers' first 15 men's basketball games this season. As each game passes, Standhardinger will check it off the list.

That's one game closer until Standhardinger, ruled ineligible by the NCAA for the first half of the regular season, can return to the court for game action.

"That doesn't mean that he can't get a lot better," Nebraska coach Doc Sadler said. "He's got to understand that. I've never had a problem if a kid's not going hard to bring it to their attention. If he's not practicing hard I'll bring it to his attention because he's got to be ready when we start league play."

That's Jan. 9, when Nebraska plays at Texas A&M. It's the first game Standhardinger, a 6-foot-8 forward from Munich, Germany, will be eligible.

In the meantime, Standhardinger, listed at 210 pounds, says he'll concentrate on hitting the weight room. He knows he'll need to be stronger to bang with the big, powerful forwards in the Big 12 Conference.

Standhardinger made the most of his game time in Nebraska's two exhibitions – an 86-66 victory over Arkansas-Fort Smith and a 71-39



victory over Hastings College. He combined for 35 points and 14 rebounds in those games, and wasn't satisfied.

"I'm not really excited about my games," he said. "There's still really a lot to improve on the defensive end, like coach said, but on the offensive end for me, too. There's shots I miss which are really getting on my nerves.

"But I think I give everything, and I try my best."

Standhardinger arrived in Lincoln in September after gaining NCAA academic clearance. But the NCAA ruled he must sit the first half of Nebraska's season for violation of an amateurism rule – he played on a German club team in which other players were paid.

Standhardinger said it may be difficult to keep his motivation high until January, although Sadler said the freshman is one of the most intense practice players.

"I would say this about Christian: There's not going to be anybody who plays any harder. He's going to give you everything he's got. He's got a knack for scoring the ball.

"He's got a long, long, long, long, long way to go defensively. It's just going to be difficult when he starts in league play. It's going to be a whole different deal than what he's used to. But he'll be fine. He'll be ready."

BIG MAN JOINS HUSKERS

Andrea Almeida, a 6-10 center from Brazil, was the only player who signed with Nebraska during the early fall-signing period.

A sophomore at Arizona Western College, Almeida has lost 35 pounds since August and weighs 315, said his coach, Kelly Green.

"He needed to reshape his body," Green said. "He's still a young kid. A lot of it was baby fat, but he's made a commitment to reshape his body. He's still got a ways to go, but it's a great start for him."

As a freshman last season, Almeida

averaged 13 points and eight rebounds, leading AWC to a 25-5 record. He was the Arizona Community College Athletic Conference player of the year.

"He's been one of the best post men in the country," Green said. "For as big as he is, he's got very good feet. Very good footwork, very good hands. Exceptional hands. And a very good passer."

YORI SIGNS FIVE

Alliance, Neb., forward Jordan Hooper headlines five players who signed national letters of intent with the Nebraska women's basketball team during the fall signing period.

The 6-2 Hooper averaged 23.3 points, 14.2 rebounds, 4.6 steals and 4.6 blocked shots as a junior to lead Alliance High School. She's a three-time Class B all-state player.

Hooper chose the Huskers over Kansas, Kansas State, Wyoming and Colorado State.

"Jordan is the best senior in the state of Nebraska and one of the best players to ever come out of our state," Yori said. "She is extremely athletic and versatile. She is more than just a good athlete. She has great basketball skill and is a very good student. When you add Jordan in with the rest of our class, we have added size and athleticism across the board."

Joining Hooper in Nebraska's 2010-11 recruiting class are Adrianna Maurer, a 6-3 forward/center from Bishop Miege High School in Shawnee Mission, Kan.; Kellie McCann-Smith, a 5-9 guard from Clarkston High School in Asotin, Wash.; Katie Simon, a 6-2 forward from Roseville, Calif.; and Rebecca Woodberry, a 5-10 guard from Tolleson Union High School in Phoenix.

"We really like the versatility, size and work ethic we have added with the five players in this class," Yori said. "I couldn't be more pleased with this class because it is loaded with talent, character and potential."

GRIFFIN HONORED

Nebraska senior Kelsey Griffin has been recognized by ESPN.com as one of the country's top five power forwards.

Griffin, a two-time first-team All-Big 12 selection, joined Xavier's Amber Harris, Gonzaga's Heather Bowman, Arizona's Ify Ibekwe and Florida State's Jacinta Moore on the listing of the top power forwards in the country. Harris and Ibekwe are juniors, while Bowman, Monroe and Griffin are all seniors.

Griffin is one of four Big 12 players to earn spots on the ESPN.com power rankings.

The others are Oklahoma's Danielle Robinson, Oklahoma State's Andrea Riley and Kansas' Danielle McCray. **N**

2009 MEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

Nov. 6	Arkansas-Fort Smith (exh.), W, 86-66
Nov. 10	Hastings (exh.), W, 71-39
Nov. 14	South Carolina Upstate, W, 76-49
Nov. 18	at Saint Louis, L, 69-55
Nov. 21	TCU, TBD
Nov. 24	UMKC, 7 p.m.
Nov. 29	at USC, TBD
Dec. 2	Texas-Pan American, 7 p.m.
Dec. 6	at Creighton, TBD
Dec. 10	Chicago State, 7 p.m.
Dec. 12	Oregon State, TBD
Dec. 19	Jackson State, 7 p.m. at Las Vegas Classic
Dec. 22	vs. Tulsa, 7 p.m.
Dec. 23	vs. BYU or Nevada, 7 or 9:30 p.m.
Dec. 29	Southern Utah, 7 p.m.
Jan. 2	Maryland Eastern Shore, TBD
Jan. 5	Southeastern Louisiana, 7 p.m.
Jan. 9	at Texas A&M, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Jan. 13	Kansas, 8 p.m., ESPN2
Jan. 16	Iowa State, TBD
Jan. 23	at Missouri, 5 p.m., Big 12 Network
Jan. 27	at Colorado, TBD
Jan. 30	Oklahoma, 12:30 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 2	Kansas State, 7 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 6	at Kansas, 5 p.m., ESPN2
Feb. 10	Baylor, 8 p.m., ESPN2
Feb. 13	at Texas, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 17	at Kansas State, TBD
Feb. 20	Missouri, 5 p.m., Big 12 Network
Feb. 24	at Iowa State, TBD
Feb. 27	Texas Tech, 3 p.m., Big 12 Network
Mar. 2	Colorado, TBD
Mar. 6	at Okla. St., 12:30 p.m., Big 12 Network at Big 12 Championship
Mar. 10-13	at Kansas City, Mo. (Sprint Center)

JOHN WALKER



SOCCER **Nebraska** **falls short of** **NCAA Tourney**

BY TOMMY DAHLK

Nebraska soccer coach John Walker obviously is a glass-half-full type of guy. Although Nebraska didn't make the NCAA Tournament for the fourth consecutive year, Walker and the Huskers consider the 2009 season a success.

"We were maybe one quality win away from getting into the NCAA Tournament," Walker said. "The disappointing thing is not making the tournament. In terms of everything else associated with the season, it was good."

The Huskers finished with an 11-5-4 record and scored 62 goals, the third-

highest mark in the NCAA.

Nebraska also beat Texas A&M and Oklahoma State, the conference teams that made the NCAA Tournament, in the regular season.

Still, a few wins that got away from the Huskers earlier in the season ultimately burst the Huskers' tournament bubble.

"In a couple non-conference games, we shot ourselves in the foot a little bit," Walker said. "At home against Arizona State and Villanova on the road, we felt we should have won but we didn't and tied."

Now that the season ended earlier than the Huskers hoped, Walker is starting to address areas that will hopefully get the Huskers an invite to the big dance once

again next year.

Walker said talent and work ethic are there. The Huskers just need to be a little more consistent.

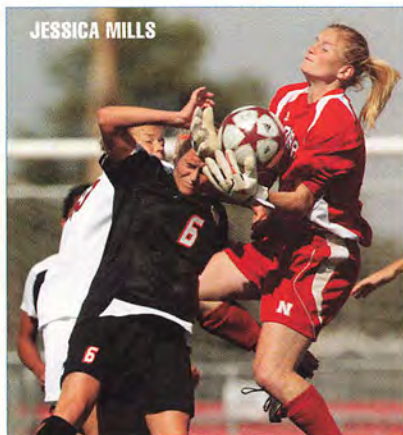
"There were a lot of positives," Walker said. "It was a real hard-working group that played a lot of attacking soccer. They're a dream to work with. Where there needs to be some progress is mental strength in tough situations whether you are on the road or in tough situations. These are the things for a lot of players individually."

The Huskers will return a talented trio of forwards in Morgan Marlborough, Jordan Jackson and Molly Thomas. So, scoring shouldn't be an issue.

However, the Huskers will lose long-time defensive standouts Carly Peetz and Anna Caniglia.

If the Huskers can replace the duo's leadership and become a little stingier on defense, Walker said there is no reason the Huskers shouldn't be primed for a run at the Big 12 title next season.

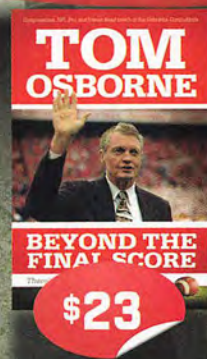
"Down the stretch, we gave too many up," Walker said. "It wasn't a territorial thing because we out-shot teams by a considerable margin. We gave up too many goals to be a real contender in the Big 12 Conference. That's something that we are already addressing and will improve in the spring." **N**



JESSICA MILLS

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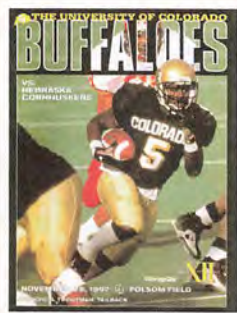




AS GOOD AS IT GETS - Willie Harper was a consensus All-America defensive end in 1971 and 1972. He was the Big Eight Conference Sophomore Lineman of the Year in 1970. And he was a three-year starter on Cornhusker teams that were a combined 33-2-1, with back-to-back national championships. Even so, he didn't receive as much recognition as his accomplishments deserved because he played with two Outland Trophy-winning defensive linemen, tackle Larry Jacobson (1971) and two-time All-America middle guard Rich Glover, who also won the Lombardi Award as a senior in 1972. "Although Willie Harper never won the Outland Trophy, I'd have to put him in the same class with Jacobson and Glover," Bob Devaney wrote in his 1981 autobiography. "He didn't get many tackles when he was a senior because no one dared run his way. Willie was one of the all-time greats at Nebraska." Harper played middle guard on the Cornhusker freshman team in 1969, moving to defensive end as a sophomore. He was a second-round draft pick of the San Francisco 49ers and played 10 NFL seasons with them.

GAMES REMEMBERED

Nov. 28, 1997 • at Boulder, Colo.



The Cornhuskers were trying not only to defeat an underachieving, 5-5 Colorado team on the day after Thanksgiving but also to impress those who voted in the polls. Top-ranked Michigan's regular-season was finished, and Nebraska trailed the Wolverines by sizeable margins. Michigan had received 69 first-place votes in the Associated Press poll that week, to Nebraska's one. And

the gap between the two in the USA Today/Coaches poll was only slightly less, 46 first-place votes to 13.

In addition, the Wolverines had defeated Colorado at Ann Arbor, Mich., early in the season 27-3. So voters were going to compare scores, despite all that had happened since.

Nebraska led 27-10 well into the fourth quarter. But "we got in the soup in a hurry," coach **TOM OSBORNE** said. The Buffaloes scored with 3:16 remaining and then scored again 39 seconds later, after recovering an on-sides kick. They would get the ball back once more, but Nebraska's defense, which gave up 455 yards, held - though the Buffs' final play gave Nebraska fans a scare.

On fourth-and-25 from his own 21-yard line, much-maligned Colorado quarterback **JOHN HESSLER** passed to wide receiver **PHIL SAVOY**, who was knocked out of bounds by Cornhusker cornerback **ERWIN SWINEY** just 3 yards short of the first down.

Colorado ranked 70th nationally in scoring defense going into the game, but the high-scoring Huskers' point total tied for their

Nebraska 27, Colorado 24

Nebraska	3	7	17	0	--	27
Colorado	0	3	7	14	--	24

- (N) Kris Brown 25 field goal
- (N) Scott Frost 19 run (Brown kick)
- (C) Jeremy Aldrich 30 field goal
- (N) Ahman Green 16 run (Brown kick)
- (C) Dwayne Cherrington 35 pass John Hessler (Aldrich kick)
- (N) Green 11 run (Brown kick)
- (N) Brown 46 field goal
- (C) Marcus Stiggers 32 pass Hessler (Aldrich kick)
- (C) Robert Toler 18 pass Hessler (Aldrich kick)

Attendance: 52,738

lowest of the season - at then-No. 2-ranked Washington in the third game of the season.

CO-CAPTAIN GRANT WISTROM: "We think the score should have been more lopsided than it was. It all came down to whether or not we could stop them on one series. This is the whole season. If we want a national championship or a trip to the Orange Bowl, it came down to this."

DO YOU REMEMBER?

► Following Nebraska's previous game, a 77-14 victory against Iowa State, the 60-year-old Tom Osborne made a late-night visit to a Lincoln hospital because of an irregular heartbeat. The next Tuesday, he had an EKG. Everything was fine, he said.

► Just over two weeks after the Colorado game, on Dec. 10, Osborne announced he would be stepping aside following the Orange Bowl game against Tennessee.

► I-back Ahman Green rushed for 202 yards, to increase his season total to 1,698. Scott Frost rushed for 76 yards to become the first Nebraska quarterback to rush for 1,000 yards in a season.

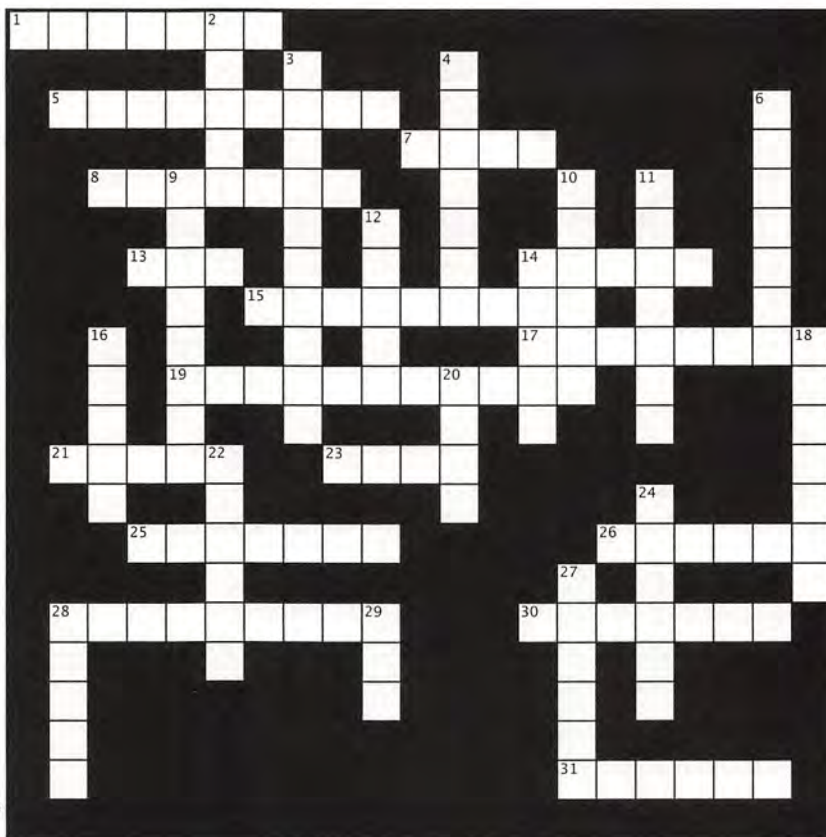
CROSSWORD & TRIVIA

ACROSS

1. Colorado mascot
5. Cornerback with sack vs. Kansas
7. Colorado school color
8. Long-time offensive line coach
13. Network for NU-Colorado telecast
14. Ex-Husker running back now with Green Bay Packers
15. City for Big 12 Championship game
17. Wears No. 34
19. Wears No. 55
21. Cody Green's home state
23. Leading receiver vs. Kansas
25. NU assistant and former Colorado assistant
26. NU assistant and former Colorado offensive coordinator
28. Colorado nickname
30. Colorado campus location
31. Mike Smith's home state

DOWN

2. 2010 non-conference opponent
3. Zac Lee's home state
4. 2011 non-conference opponent
6. Former Colorado head coach
9. 1999 Big 12 champion
10. Wears No. 99
11. 1994 Outland Trophy winner
12. Wears No. 94
14. Leading tackler vs. Kansas
16. Wears No. 95
18. Colorado head coach
20. Scored NU's first touchdown vs. Kansas
22. Colorado Heisman Trophy winner
24. 1997 Outland Trophy winner
27. Ex-Husker cornerback now with Chicago Bears
28. Ex-Husker safety now with Kansas City Chiefs
29. Wears No. 93



Answers will appear in the Dec. 5 issue

HUSKERNUTZ



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NOV. 21 CROSSWORD SOLUTION





THE FINAL WORD

BY MIKE BABCOCK

Asante drips with ice water, emotion

BO PELINI hadn't seen it coming. And neither had Larry Asante.

A half minute or so remained in Nebraska's 17-3 victory against Kansas State.

"Coach (Pelini) came up to me and was giving me a hug," Asante said. "He was telling me how he loved me and how I had (come) along as a player out of nowhere."

It was then that "they just dumped the Gatorade machine on me," he said.

Actually, the bucket had a Gatorade logo, but it contained ice water.

So the ice water dump was intended for Pelini. Coaches are always the target following a big victory. But in this case, Asante, a senior safety, took the brunt of the deluge.

But "it was out of joy," said Asante. "So I'm happy."

Pelini, whose gray sweatshirt was soaked when he was interviewed by ESPN's Erin Andrews as he was leaving the field, was happy as well. "I'll take it," he said. "It was a good win."

It was Nebraska's eighth victory in Pelini's second season as head coach and sends the Cornhuskers to Arlington, Texas, to play Texas in the Big 12 Championship game on Dec. 5, regardless of what happens at Colorado on the day after Thanksgiving.

Nebraska last played in the conference title game in 2006.

Few expected the Cornhuskers to be playing in it this year, following a second consecutive loss at home against Iowa

State just four weeks earlier. But they learned a lesson that day. "On any given Saturday, if you don't show up and play, any team can beat you," Asante said.

"You have to respect the game of football."

(And not turn the ball over eight times.)

A cliché, perhaps, but words of significance for Asante.

To understand the depth of his emotion, go back to his first season at Nebraska, 2007. One afternoon following practice, in what would be Bill Callahan's final season as head coach, Asante fought back tears of frustration as he talked to a reporter about mounting losses.

There were tears on this particular night, too, but of a different kind.

"It was a very emotional game for me, my last 'Tunnel Walk,'" said Asante.

"When I was walking out of the tunnel for the last time, I was in tears. And for me to go out how I played this game, it's a great feeling. I'm just happy God protected me and my teammates . . ."

How Asante played was how he has played all season, how he has played throughout his career, full-go when he was able. He was credited with a team-high 10 tackles. He intercepted a pass. And he forced a fumble, knocking the ball loose at the Nebraska 1-yard line early in the third quarter.

Kansas State was trying to respond to the Cornhuskers' second touchdown and had driven to the 13-yard line. On third-and-9, Grant Gregory passed to Keithen

Valentine. Asante punched the ball loose, and cornerback Prince Amukamara scooped it up and returned it 4 yards.

"It was a big play," Asante said. "But at the same time, I was in the right position to make a play, so I give credit to the coaching staff (for) calling the right play."

"I happened to be in the right position to make a play, to make a big hit."

The defense has improved dramatically under Pelini, who described it as

"demoralized" when he arrived. One difference now is "we take it personal as a unit," said Asante, one of 13 seniors (and junior Blake Lawrence) making their final appearance at Memorial Stadium. "We don't want to give up any points. Our goal is to hold our opponents to zero points, and I think we didn't have that culture back then (pre-Pelini), and that's the culture that Coach has installed in us."

"Coach always preaches, 'Play each play like it's your last.' And we went out there and we played together. We played for the senior class. We wanted to go out the right way."

Having ice water dumped on him, as a kind of innocent bystander, was the right way.

It was the first time he had experienced that.

Pelini, however, should have expected it. "Somebody sold me out behind me," he said in mock seriousness. "I'm going to find out who it is."

Prince Amukamara appeared to be involved, but what does it matter? **N**



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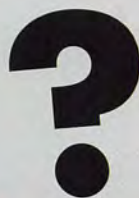
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Bowl Season

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The team is fully prepared.
All the hours of work invested.
People will be watching, oh they'll
definitely be watching. And we are
ready to take on all the challenges.**



2009 Nebraska Football Schedule

Date	Opponent	Location	Time/Results
Sat, Sep 05	Florida Atlantic	Memorial Stadium	W, 49-3
Sat, Sep 12	Arkansas State	Memorial Stadium	W, 38-9
Sat, Sep 19	at Virginia Tech	at Blacksburg, VA	L, 15-16
Sat, Sep 26	Louisiana-Lafayette	Memorial Stadium	W, 55-0
Thu, Oct 08	at Missouri *	at Columbia, MO	W, 27-12
Sat, Oct 17	Texas Tech *	Memorial Stadium	L, 10-31
Sat, Oct 24	Iowa State *	Memorial Stadium	L, 7-9
Sat, Oct 31	at Baylor *	at Waco, TX	W, 20-10
Sat, Nov 07	Oklahoma *	Memorial Stadium	W, 10-3
Sat, Nov 14	at Kansas *	at Lawrence, KS	W, 31-17
Sat, Nov 21	Kansas State *	Memorial Stadium	W, 17-3
Fri, Nov 27	at Colorado *	at Boulder, CO	2:30 p.m., ABC
Sat, Dec 5	Big 12 Championship	Arlington, TX <small>(Dallas Cowboys New Stadium)</small>	7 p.m., ABC

* Conference games



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